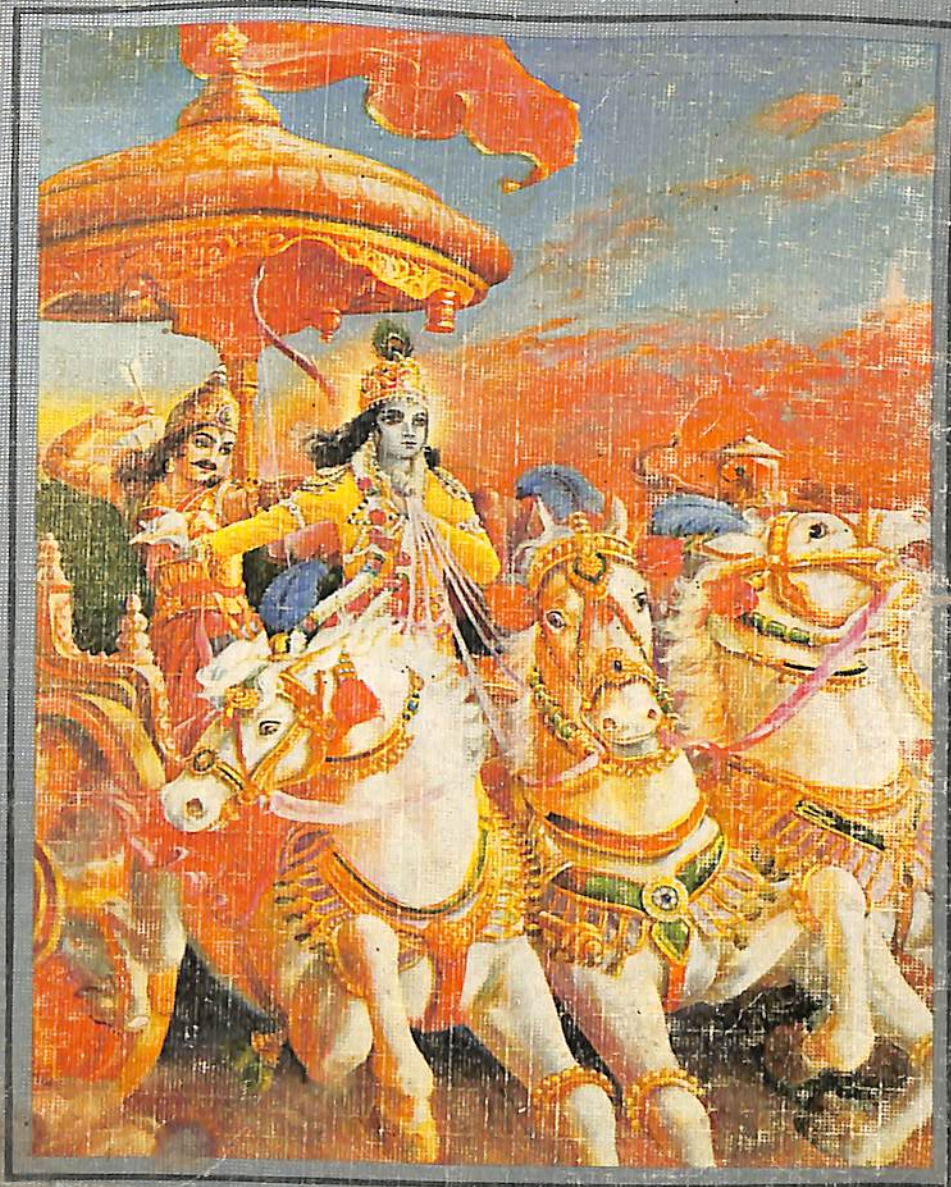


Bhagavad-gītā

As It Is

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His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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Former Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

All Glory to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

G. R. Bhattacharya
Cochin
Kerala
198

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AS IT IS

Abridged Edition

*with original
Sanskrit text and translation*

by

His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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To
ŚRĪLA BALADEVA VIDYĀBHŪṢAṆA
who presented so nicely
the "*Govinda-bhāṣya*" commentary
on
Vedānta philosophy

To
SRI RAJ KISHOREN JODHYAPURANA
who presented to himself
the "Canda-dhara" commentary
on
Veda to Philosophy

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Foreword

The *Bhagavad-gītā* is the best known and the most frequently translated of Vedic religious texts. Why it should be so appealing to the Western mind is an interesting question. It has drama, for its setting is a scene of two great armies, banners flying, drawn up opposite one another on the field, poised for battle. It has ambiguity, and the fact that Arjuna and his charioteer Kṛṣṇa are carrying on their dialogue between the two armies suggests the indecision of Arjuna about the basic question: should he enter battle against and kill those who are friends and kinsmen? It has mystery, as Kṛṣṇa demonstrates to Arjuna His cosmic form. It has a properly complicated view of the ways of the religious life and treats of the paths of knowledge, works, discipline and faith and their inter-relationships, problems that have bothered adherents of other religions in other times and places. The devotion spoken of is a deliberate means of religious satisfaction, not a mere outpouring of poetic emotion. Next to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, a long work from South India, the *Gītā* is the text most frequently quoted in the philosophical writings of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school, the school represented by Swami Bhaktivedanta as the latest in a long succession of teachers. It can be said that this school of Vaiṣṇavism was founded, or revived, by Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1533) in Bengal, and that it is currently the strongest single religious force in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school, for whom Kṛṣṇa is Himself the Supreme God, and not merely an incarnation of another deity, sees *bhakti* as an immediate and powerful religious force, consisting of love between man and God. Its discipline consists of devoting all one's actions to the Deity, and one listens to the stories of Kṛṣṇa from the sacred texts, one chants Kṛṣṇa's name, washes, bathes, and dresses the *mūrti* of Kṛṣṇa, feeds Him and takes the remains of the food offered to Him, thus absorbing His grace; one does these things and many more, until one has been changed: the devotee has become transformed into one close to Kṛṣṇa, and sees the Lord face to face.

Swami Bhaktivedanta comments upon the *Gītā* from this point of view, and that is legitimate. More than that, in this translation the Western reader has the unique opportunity of seeing how a Kṛṣṇa devotee interprets his own texts. It is the Vedic exegetical tradition, justly famous, in action. This book is then a welcome addition from many points of view. It can serve as a valuable textbook for the college student. It allows us to listen to

a skilled interpreter explicating a text which has profound religious meaning. It gives us insights into the original and highly convincing ideas of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school. In providing the Sanskrit in both Devanagari and transliteration, it offers the Sanskrit specialist the opportunity to re-interpret, or debate particular Sanskrit meanings—although I think there will be little disagreement about the quality of the Swami's Sanskrit scholarship. And finally, for the nonspecialist, there is readable English and a devotional attitude which cannot help but move the sensitive reader. And there are the paintings, which, incredibly as it may seem to those familiar with contemporary Indian religious art, were done by American devotees.

The scholar, the student of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, and the increasing number of Western readers interested in classical Vedic thought have been done a service by Swami Bhaktivedanta. By bringing us a new and living interpretation of a text already known to many, he has increased our understanding manyfold; and arguments for understanding, in these days of estrangement, need not be made.

Professor Edward C. Dimock, Jr.

*Department of South Asian Languages and Civilization
University of Chicago*

Preface

Originally I wrote *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in the form in which it is presented now. When this book was first published, the original manuscript was, unfortunately, cut short to less than 400 pages, without illustrations and without explanations for most of the original verses of the *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. In all of my other books—*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Isopaniṣad*, etc.—the system is that I give the original verse, its English transliteration, word-for-word Sanskrit-English equivalents, translations and purports. This makes the book very authentic and scholarly and makes the meaning self-evident. I was not very happy, therefore, when I had to minimize my original manuscript. But later on, when the demand for *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* considerably increased, I was requested by many scholars and devotees to present the book in its original form, and Messrs. Macmillan and Co. agreed to publish the complete edition. Thus the present attempt is to offer the original manuscript of this great book of knowledge with full *paramparā* explanation in order to establish the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement more soundly and progressively.

Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is genuine, historically authorized, natural and transcendental due to its being based on *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. It is gradually becoming the most popular movement in the entire world, especially amongst the younger generation. It is becoming more and more interesting to the older generation also. Older gentlemen are becoming interested, so much so that the fathers and grandfathers of my disciples are encouraging us by becoming life members of our great society, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. In Los Angeles many fathers and mothers used to come to see me to express their feelings of gratitude for my leading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement throughout the entire world. Some of them said that it is greatly fortunate for the Americans that I have started the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in America. But actually the original father of this movement is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, since it was started a very long time ago but is coming down to human society by disciplic succession. If I have any credit in this connection, it does not belong to me personally, but it is due to my eternal spiritual master, His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivṛājākācārya 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda.

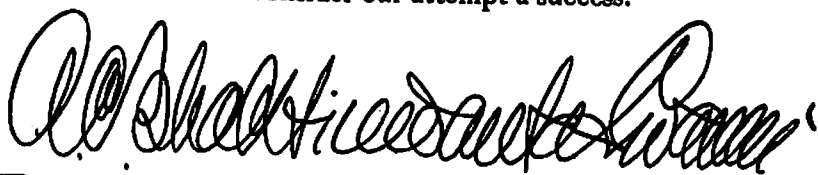
If personally I have any credit in this matter, it is only that I have tried to present *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, without adulteration. Before my presentation of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, almost all the English editions of *Bhagavad-gītā* were introduced to fulfill someone's personal ambition. But our attempt, in presenting *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, is to present the mission of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Our business is to present the will of Kṛṣṇa, not that of any mundane speculator like the politician, philosopher or scientist, for they have very little knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, despite all their other knowledge. When Kṛṣṇa says, *man-manā bhava mad-bhaktō mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru*, etc., we, unlike the so-called scholars, do not say that Kṛṣṇa and His inner spirit are different. Kṛṣṇa is absolute, and there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's form, Kṛṣṇa's quality, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, etc. This absolute position of Kṛṣṇa is difficult to understand for any person who is not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa in the *param-parā* (disciplic succession) system. Generally the so-called scholars, politicians, philosophers, and *svāmīs*, without perfect knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, try to banish or kill Kṛṣṇa when writing commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*. Such unauthorized commentary upon *Bhagavad-gītā* is known as *Māyāvādī-Bhāṣya*, and Lord Caitanya has warned us about these unauthorized men. Lord Caitanya clearly says that anyone who tries to understand *Bhagavad-gītā* from the *Māyāvādī* point of view will commit a great blunder. The result of such a blunder will be that the misguided student of *Bhagavad-gītā* will certainly be bewildered on the path of spiritual guidance and will not be able to go back home, back to Godhead.

Our only purpose is to present this *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in order to guide the conditioned student to the same purpose for which Kṛṣṇa descends to this planet once in a day of *Brahmā*, or every 8,600,000,000 years. This purpose is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, and we have to accept it as it is; otherwise there is no point in trying to understand the *Bhagavad-gītā* and its speaker, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa first spoke *Bhagavad-gītā* to the sun-god some hundreds of millions of years ago. We have to accept this fact and thus understand the historical significance of *Bhagavad-gītā*, without misinterpretation, on the authority of Kṛṣṇa. To interpret *Bhagavad-gītā* without any reference to the will of Kṛṣṇa is the greatest offense. In order to save oneself from this offense, one has to understand the Lord as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as He was directly understood by Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa's first disciple. Such understanding of *Bhagavad-gītā* is really profitable and authorized for the welfare of human society in fulfilling the mission of life.

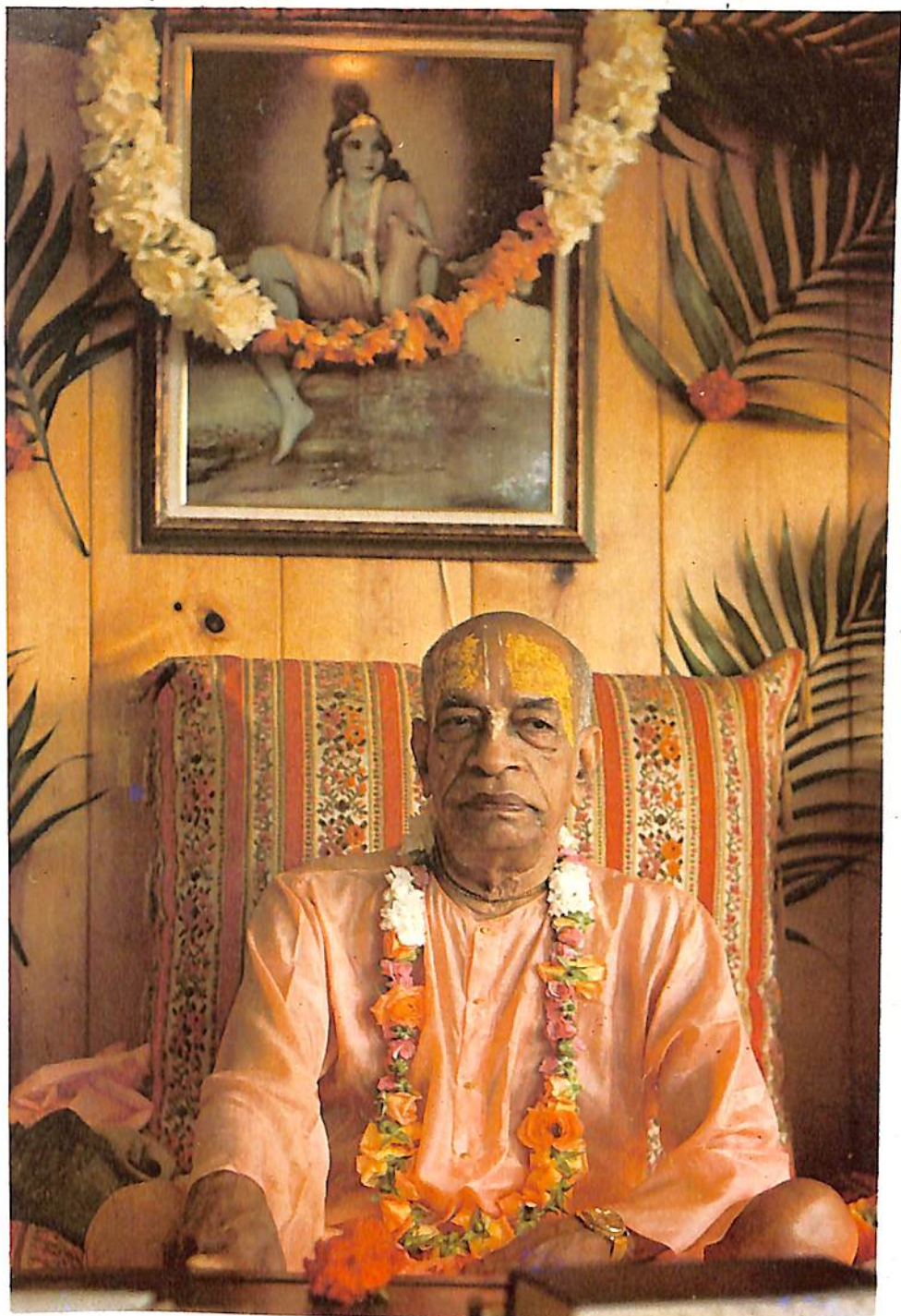
The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is essential in human society, for it offers the highest perfection of life. How this is so is explained fully in the

Bhagavad-gītā. Unfortunately, mundane wranglers have taken advantage of *Bhagavad-gītā* to push forward their demonic propensities and mislead people regarding right understanding of the simple principles of life. Everyone should know how God or Kṛṣṇa is great, and everyone should know the factual position of the living entities. Everyone should know that a living entity is eternally a servant and that unless one serves Kṛṣṇa one has to serve illusion in different varieties of the three modes of material nature, and thus perpetually one has to wander within the cycle of birth and death; even the so-called liberated Māyāvādī speculator has to undergo this process. This knowledge constitutes a great science, and each and every living being has to hear it for his own interest.

People in general, especially in this age of Kali, are enamored by the external energy of Kṛṣṇa, and they wrongly think that by advancement of material comforts every man will be happy. They have no knowledge that the material or external nature is very strong, for everyone is strongly bound by the stringent laws of material nature. A living entity is happily the part and parcel of the Lord, and thus his natural function is to render immediate service to the Lord. By the spell of illusion one tries to be happy by serving his personal sense gratification in different forms which will never make him happy. Instead of satisfying his own personal material senses, he has to satisfy the senses of the Lord. That is the highest perfection of life. The Lord wants this, and He demands it. One has to understand this central point of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is teaching the whole world this central point, and because we are not polluting the theme of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, anyone seriously interested in deriving benefit by studying the *Bhagavad-gītā* must take help from the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement for practical understanding of *Bhagavad-gītā* under the direct guidance of the Lord. We hope, therefore, that people will derive the greatest benefit by studying *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* as we have presented it here, and if even one man becomes a pure devotee of the Lord we shall consider our attempt a success.



12 May 1971
Sydney, Australia



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
*The Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON and greatest exponent
of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western world.*



In this age of Kali, people endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship
ord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance
the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*. (pp.48-49)

About the Author

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda appeared in this world in 1896 in Calcutta, India. He first met his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami, in Calcutta in 1922. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, the foremost scholar and devotee of his time, had founded the Gauḍīya Maṭha (a Vedic institute with sixty-four branches throughout India). He liked this educated young man and convinced him to dedicate his life to teaching Vedic knowledge. Śrīla Prabhupāda became his student, and eleven years later (1933) at Allahabad he became his formally initiated disciple.

At their first meeting, in 1922, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura requested Śrīla Prabhupāda to broadcast Vedic knowledge through the English language. In the years that followed, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the most important Vedic text, and he assisted the Gauḍīya Maṭha in its work. In 1944 he singlehandedly started an English fortnightly magazine called *Back to Godhead*. He edited and typed the manuscripts, checked the galley proofs, and even distributed the copies for free and struggled to maintain the publication.

Recognizing Śrīla Prabhupāda's philosophical learning and devotion, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Society honored him in 1947 with the title "Bhaktivedanta." In 1950, at age fifty-four, Śrīla Prabhupāda retired from family life. Four years later he adopted the *vānaprastha* (retired) order to devote more time to his studies and writing, and soon he traveled to the holy city of Vṛndāvana. There he lived in a small room in the historic Rādhā-Dāmodara temple and engaged in several years of deep study and writing. In 1959 he accepted the renounced order of life (*sannyāsa*). At Rādhā-Dāmodara, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote *Easy Journey to Other Planets* and started his life's masterpiece—a multivolume translation of and commentary on the eighteen-thousand-verse *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the cream of the Vedic literatures.

After publishing three volumes of the *Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the United States in 1965 to fulfill the mission of his spiritual master. After that time, His Divine Grace wrote some eighty volumes of authoritative translations, commentaries, and summary studies of the philosophical and religious classics of India. When he first arrived by freighter in New York City, Śrīla Prabhupāda was practically penniless. But after nearly a year of great difficulty, he founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in July of 1966. Before his much-lamented passing on November 14, 1977, he guided the Society and saw

it grow to a worldwide confederation of more than one hundred ashrams, schools, temples, institutes, and farm communities.

In 1968, Śrīla Prabhupāda created New Vṇḍāvana, an experimental Vedic community in the hills of West Virginia. Inspired by the success of New Vṇḍāvana (now a thriving farm community of more than one thousand acres), his students have since founded several similar communities in the United States and abroad.

In 1975 Śrīla Prabhupāda's magnificent Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple and International Guesthouse opened in Vṇḍāvana, India. In 1978 a four-acre cultural complex (including a temple, modern theater, guesthouse, and vegetarian restaurant) opened at Juhu Beach, in Bombay. Perhaps Śrīla Prabhupāda's most ambitious project is a planned city of fifty thousand residents in Māyāpur, West Bengal. Śrīdhāma Māyāpur will stand as a model for the whole world—a microcosm of Vedic life as it was five thousand years ago.

In addition, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave the West the Vedic system of primary and secondary education. The *gurukula* ("the school of the spiritual master") started only in 1972, but already it has hundreds of students and many branches around the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's most significant contribution, of course, is his books. The academic community respects them for their authoritative-ness, depth, and clarity, and has made them standard textbooks in numerous college courses. In addition, translations of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books now appear in twenty-five languages. The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, established in 1972 primarily to publish the works of His Divine Grace, has thus become the world's largest publisher of books in the field of Indian religion and philosophy. A recent project has been the publishing of a seventeen-volume translation and commentary—which Śrīla Prabhupāda completed in only eighteen months—on the Bengali religious classic *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In just twelve years, in spite of his advanced age, Śrīla Prabhupāda circled the globe fourteen times on lecture tours that took him to six continents. In spite of such a vigorous schedule, Śrīla Prabhupāda continued to write prolifically. His writings are a library of Vedic philosophy, religion, and culture.



INTRODUCTION

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

*śrī-caitanya-mano 'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikam*

I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.

When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfill the desire of Lord Caitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet?

*vande 'haṁ śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavāṁś ca
śrī-rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānviataṁ taṁ sa-jīvaṁ
sādvaitaṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sahitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānviatāṁś ca*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master and unto the feet of all Vaiṣṇavas. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī along with his elder brother Sanātana Gosvāmī, as well as Raghunātha Dāsa and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. I offer my respectful obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda along with Advaita Ācārya,

Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa, and other associates. I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa along with Their associates, Śrī Lalitā and Viśākhā.

*he kṛṣṇa karunā-sindho dīna-bandho jagat-pate
gopeśa gopikā-kānta rādhā-kānta namo 'stu te*

O my dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the friend of the distressed and the source of creation. You are the master of the *gopīs* and the lover of Rādhārāṇī. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

*tapta-kāñcana-gaurāṅgi rādhe vṛndāvaneśvari
vṛṣabhānu-sute devi praṇamāmi hari-priye*

I offer my respects to Rādhārāṇī whose bodily complexion is like molten gold and who is the Queen of Vṛndāvana. You are the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, and You are very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord who can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire trees, and who are full of compassion for the fallen souls.

*śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya prabhu nityānanda
śrī advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa, hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa, hare hare
hare rāma, hare rāma, rāma rāma, hare hare.*

Bhagavad-gītā is also known as *Gītāpaniṣad*. It is the essence of Vedic knowledge and one of the most important *Upaniṣads* in Vedic literature. Of course there are many commentaries in English on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and one may question the necessity for another one. This present edition can be explained in the following way. Recently an American lady asked me to recommend an English translation of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Of course in America there are so many editions of *Bhagavad-gītā* available in English, but as far as I have seen, not only in America but also in India, none of them can be strictly said to be authoritative because in almost every one of them the commentator has expressed his own opinions without touching the spirit of *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is.

The spirit of *Bhagavad-gītā* is mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā* itself. It is just like this: if we want to take a particular medicine, then we have to follow the directions written on the label. We cannot take the medicine according to our own whim or the direction of a friend. It must be taken according to the directions on the label or the directions given by a physician. Similarly, *Bhagavad-gītā* should be taken or accepted as it is directed by the speaker himself. The speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā* is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is mentioned on every page of *Bhagavad-gītā* as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān. Of course the word "*bhagavān*" sometimes refers to any powerful person or any powerful demigod, and certainly here Bhagavān designates Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a great personality, but at the same time we should know that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as is confirmed by all great *ācāryas* (spiritual masters) like Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmāṇujācārya, Madhvācārya, Nimbārka Svāmī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and many other authorities of Vedic knowledge in India. The Lord Himself also establishes Himself as the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and He is accepted as such in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* and all the *Purāṇas*, especially the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, known as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (*Kṛṣṇas tu bhāgavān svayam*). Therefore we should take *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is directed by the Personality of Godhead Himself.

In the Fourth Chapter of the *Gītā* the Lord says:

- (1) *imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavān ahaṁ avyayam
vivasvān manave prāha manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt*
- (2) *evam paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa*
- (3) *sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya yogaṁ proktaḥ purātanaḥ
bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam*

Here the Lord informs Arjuna that this system of *yoga*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, was first spoken to the sun-god, and the sun-god explained it to Manu, and Manu explained it to Ikṣvāku, and in that way, by disciplic succession, one speaker after another, this *yoga* system has been coming down. But in the course of time it has become lost. Consequently the Lord has to speak it again, this time to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra.

He tells Arjuna that He is relating this supreme secret to him because he is His devotee and His friend. The purport of this is that *Bhagavad-gītā* is a treatise which is especially meant for the devotee of the Lord. There are three classes of transcendentalists, namely the *jñānī*, the *yogī* and the *bhakta*, or the impersonalist, the meditator and the devotee. Here the Lord clearly tells Arjuna that He is making him the first receiver of a new *paramparā* (disciplic succession) because the old succession was broken. It was the Lord's wish, therefore, to establish another *paramparā* in the same line of thought that was coming down from the sun-god to others, and it was His wish that His teaching be distributed anew by Arjuna. He wanted Arjuna to become the authority in understanding the *Bhagavad-gītā*. So we see that *Bhagavad-gītā* is instructed to Arjuna especially because Arjuna was a devotee of the Lord, a direct student of Kṛṣṇa, and His intimate friend. Therefore *Bhagavad-gītā* is best understood by a person who has qualities similar to Arjuna's. That is to say he must be a devotee in a direct relationship with the Lord. As soon as one becomes a devotee of the Lord, he also has a direct relationship with the Lord. That is a very elaborate subject matter, but briefly it can be stated that a devotee is in a relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead in one of five different ways:

1. One may be a devotee in a passive state;
2. One may be a devotee in an active state;
3. One may be a devotee as a friend;
4. One may be a devotee as a parent;
5. One may be a devotee as a conjugal lover.

Arjuna was in a relationship with the Lord as friend. Of course there is a gulf of difference between this friendship and the friendship found in the material world. This is transcendental friendship which cannot be had by everyone. Of course everyone has a particular relationship with the Lord, and that relationship is evoked by the perfection of devotional service. But in the present status of our life, we have not only forgotten the Supreme Lord, but we have forgotten our eternal relationship with

the Lord. Every living being, out of many, many billions and trillions of living beings, has a particular relationship with the Lord eternally. That is called *svarūpa*. By the process of devotional service, one can revive that *svarūpa*, and that stage is called *svarūpa-siddhi*—perfection of one's constitutional position. So Arjuna was a devotee, and he was in touch with the Supreme Lord in friendship.

How Arjuna accepted this *Bhagavad-gītā* should be noted. His manner of acceptance is given in the Tenth Chapter.

(12) *arjuna uvāca*

*param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam ādi-devam ājam vibhum*

(13) *āhus tvām ṛṣayaḥ sarve devarṣir nāradaś tathā*

asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṁ caiva bravīṣi me

(14) *sarvam etad ṛtaṁ manye yan māṁ vadasi keśava*

na hi te bhagavan vyaktiṁ vidur devā na dānavāḥ

“Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Brahman, the ultimate, the supreme abode and purifier, the Absolute Truth and the eternal Divine Person. You are the primal God, transcendental and original, and You are the unborn and all-pervading beauty. All the great sages like Nārada, Asita, Devala, and Vyāsa proclaim this of You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me. O Kṛṣṇa, I totally accept as truth all that You have told me. Neither the gods nor demons, O Lord, know Thy personality.” (Bg. 10.12-14).

After hearing *Bhagavad-gītā* from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa as *Param Brahma*, the Supreme Brahman. Every living being is Brahman, but the supreme living being, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the Supreme Brahman. *Param dhāma* means that He is the supreme rest or abode of everything, *pavitraṁ* means that He is pure, untainted by material contamination, *puruṣaṁ* means that He is the supreme enjoyer, *divyam*, transcendental, *ādi-devam*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, *ajam*, the unborn, and *vibhum*, the greatest, the all-pervading.

Now one may think that because Kṛṣṇa was the friend of Arjuna, Arjuna was telling Him all this by way of flattery, but Arjuna, just to drive out this kind of doubt from the minds of the readers of *Bhagavad-gītā*, substantiates these praises in the next verse when he says that Kṛṣṇa

is accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead not only by himself but by authorities like the sage Nārada, Asita, Devala, Vyāsadeva and so on. These are great personalities who distribute the Vedic knowledge as it is accepted by all *ācāryas*. Therefore Arjuna tells Kṛṣṇa that he accepts whatever He says to be completely perfect. *Sarvam etad ṛtaṁ manye*: "I accept everything You say to be true." Arjuna also says that the personality of the Lord is very difficult to understand and that He cannot be known even by the great demigods. This means that the Lord cannot even be known by personalities greater than human beings. So how can a human being understand Śrī Kṛṣṇa without becoming His devotee?

Therefore *Bhagavad-gītā* should be taken up in a spirit of devotion. One should not think that he is equal to Kṛṣṇa, nor should he think that Kṛṣṇa is an ordinary personality or even a very great personality. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, at least theoretically, according to the statements of *Bhagavad-gītā* or the statements of Arjuna, the person who is trying to understand the *Bhagavad-gītā*. We should therefore at least theoretically accept Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and with that submissive spirit we can understand the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Unless one reads the *Bhagavad-gītā* in a submissive spirit, it is very difficult to understand *Bhagavad-gītā* because it is a great mystery.

Just what is the *Bhagavad-gītā*? The purpose of *Bhagavad-gītā* is to deliver mankind from the nescience of material existence. Every man is in difficulty in so many ways, as Arjuna also was in difficulty in having to fight the Battle of Kurukṣetra. Arjuna surrendered unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and consequently this *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken. Not only Arjuna, but every one of us is full of anxieties because of this material existence. Our very existence is in the atmosphere of nonexistence. Actually we are not meant to be threatened by nonexistence. Our existence is eternal. But somehow or other we are put into *asat*. *Asat* refers to that which does not exist.

Out of so many human beings who are suffering, there are a few who are actually inquiring about their position, as to what they are, why they are put into this awkward position and so on. Unless one is awakened to this position of questioning his suffering, unless he realizes that he doesn't want suffering but rather wants to make a solution to all sufferings, then one is not to be considered a perfect human being. Humanity begins when this sort of inquiry is awakened in one's mind. In the *Brahma-sūtra* this inquiry is called "*brahma-jijñāsā*." Every activity of the human being is to be considered a failure unless he inquires about the nature of the Absolute. Therefore those who begin to question why they are suffering or where they came from and where they shall go after death are proper

students for understanding *Bhagavad-gītā*. The sincere student should also have a firm respect for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such a student was Arjuna.

Lord Kṛṣṇa descends specifically to reestablish the real purpose of life when man forgets that purpose. Even then, out of many, many human beings who awaken, there may be one who actually enters the spirit of understanding his position, and for him this *Bhagavad-gītā* is spoken. Actually we are all followed by the tiger of nescience, but the Lord is very merciful upon living entities, especially human beings. To this end He spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*, making His friend Arjuna His student.

Being an associate of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna was above all ignorance, but Arjuna was put into ignorance on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra just to question Lord Kṛṣṇa about the problems of life so that the Lord could explain them for the benefit of future generations of human beings and chalk out the plan of life. Then man could act accordingly and perfect the mission of human life.

The subject of the *Bhagavad-gītā* entails the comprehension of five basic truths. First of all, the science of God is explained and then the constitutional position of the living entities, *jīvas*. There is *īśvara*, which means controller, and there are *jīvas*, the living entities which are controlled. If a living entity says that he is not controlled but that he is free, then he is insane. The living being is controlled in every respect, at least in his conditioned life. So in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the subject matter deals with the *īśvara*, the supreme controller, and the *jīvas*, the controlled living entities. *Prakṛti* (material nature) and time (the duration of existence of the whole universe or the manifestation of material nature) and *karma* (activity) are also discussed. The cosmic manifestation is full of different activities. All living entities are engaged in different activities. From *Bhagavad-gītā* we must learn what God is, what the living entities are, what *prakṛti* is, what the cosmic manifestation is and how it is controlled by time, and what the activities of the living entities are.

Out of these five basic subject matters in *Bhagavad-gītā* it is established that the Supreme Godhead, or Kṛṣṇa, or Brahman, or supreme controller, or Paramātmā—you may use whatever name you like—is the greatest of all. The living beings are in quality like the supreme controller. For instance, the Lord has control over the universal affairs, over material nature, etc., as will be explained in the later chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Material nature is not independent. She is acting under the directions of the Supreme Lord. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "*Prakṛti* is working under My direction." When we see

wonderful things happening in the cosmic nature, we should know that behind this cosmic manifestation there is a controller. Nothing could be manifested without being controlled. It is childish not to consider the controller. For instance, a child may think that an automobile is quite wonderful to be able to run without a horse or other animal pulling it, but a sane man knows the nature of the automobile's engineering arrangement. He always knows that behind the machinery there is a man, a driver. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is a driver under whose direction everything is working. Now the *jīvas*, or the living entities, have been accepted by the Lord, as we will note in the later chapters, as His parts and parcels. A particle of gold is also gold, a drop of water from the ocean is also salty, and similarly, we the living entities, being part and parcel of the supreme controller, *īśvara*, or Bhagavān, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, have all the qualities of the Supreme Lord in minute quantity because we are minute *īśvaras*, subordinate *īśvaras*. We are trying to control nature, as presently we are trying to control space or planets, and this tendency to control is there because it is in Kṛṣṇa. But although we have a tendency to lord it over material nature, we should know that we are not the supreme controller. This is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

What is material nature? This is also explained in *Gītā* as inferior *prakṛti*, inferior nature. The living entity is explained as the superior *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is always under control, whether inferior or superior. *Prakṛti* is female, and she is controlled by the Lord just as the activities of a wife are controlled by the husband. *Prakṛti* is always subordinate, predominated by the Lord, who is the predominator. The living entities and material nature are both predominated, controlled by the Supreme Lord. According to the *Gītā*, the living entities, although parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, are to be considered *prakṛti*. This is clearly mentioned in the Seventh Chapter, fifth verse of *Bhagavad-gītā*: "*Apareyam itas tv anyām.*" "This *prakṛti* is My lower nature." "*Prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām jīva-bhūtām mahā-bāho yayedam dhāryate jagat.*" And beyond this there is another *prakṛti*: *jīva-bhūtām*, the living entity.

Prakṛti itself is constituted by three qualities: the mode of goodness, the mode of passion and the mode of ignorance. Above these modes there is eternal time, and by a combination of these modes of nature and under the control and purview of eternal time there are activities which are called *karma*. These activities are being carried out from time immemorial, and we are suffering or enjoying the fruits of our activities. For instance, suppose I am a businessman and have worked very hard with intelligence and have amassed a great bank balance. Then I am an enjoyer. But then

say I have lost all my money in business; then I am a sufferer. Similarly, in every field of life we enjoy the results of our work, or we suffer the results. This is called *karma*.

Īśvara (the Supreme Lord), *jīva* (the living entity), *prakṛti* (nature), eternal time and *karma* (activity) are all explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Out of these five, the Lord, the living entities, material nature and time are eternal. The manifestation of *prakṛti* may be temporary, but it is not false. Some philosophers say that the manifestation of material nature is false, but according to the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā* or according to the philosophy of the Vaiṣṇavas, this is not so. The manifestation of the world is not accepted as false; it is accepted as real, but temporary. It is likened unto a cloud which moves across the sky, or the coming of the rainy season which nourishes grains. As soon as the rainy season is over and as soon as the cloud goes away, all the crops which were nourished by the rain dry up. Similarly, this material manifestation takes place at a certain interval, stays for a while and then disappears. Such are the workings of *prakṛti*. But this cycle is working eternally. Therefore *prakṛti* is eternal; it is not false. The Lord refers to this as "My *prakṛti*." This material nature is the separated energy of the Supreme Lord, and similarly the living entities are also the energy of the Supreme Lord, but they are not separated. They are eternally related. So the Lord, the living entity, material nature and time are all interrelated and are all eternal. However, the other item, *karma*, is not eternal. The effects of *karma* may be very old indeed. We are suffering or enjoying the results of our activities from time immemorial, but we can change the results of our *karma*, or our activity, and this change depends on the perfection of our knowledge. We are engaged in various activities. Undoubtedly we do not know what sort of activities we should adopt to gain relief from the actions and reactions of all these activities, but this is also explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

The position of *Īśvara* is that of supreme consciousness. The *jīvas*, or the living entities, being parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, are also conscious. Both the living entity and material nature are explained as *prakṛti*, the energy of the Supreme Lord, but one of the two, the *jīva*, is conscious. The other *prakṛti* is not conscious. That is the difference. Therefore the *jīva-prakṛti* is called superior because the *jīva* has consciousness which is similar to the Lord's. The Lord's is supreme consciousness, however, and one should not claim that the *jīva*, the living entity, is also supremely conscious. The living being cannot be supremely conscious at any stage of his perfection, and the theory that he can be so is a misleading theory. Conscious he may be, but he is not perfectly or supremely conscious.

The distinction between the *jīva* and the *īśvara* will be explained in the Thirteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The Lord is *kṣetra-jñāḥ*, conscious, as is the living being, but the living being is conscious of his particular body, whereas the Lord is conscious of all bodies. Because He lives in the heart of every living being, He is conscious of the psychic movements of the particular *jīvas*. We should not forget this. It is also explained that the *Paramātmā*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is living in everyone's heart as *īśvara*, as the controller, and that He is giving directions for the living entity to act as he desires. The living entity forgets what to do. First of all he makes a determination to act in a certain way, and then he is entangled in the acts and reactions of his own *karma*. After giving up one type of body, he enters another type of body, as we put on and take off old clothes. As the soul thus migrates, he suffers the actions and reactions of his past activities. These activities can be changed when the living being is in the mode of goodness, in sanity, and understands what sort of activities he should adopt. If he does so, then all the actions and reactions of his past activities can be changed. Consequently, *karma* is not eternal. Therefore we stated that of the five items (*īśvara*, *jīva*, *prakṛti*, time and *karma*) four are eternal, whereas *karma* is not eternal.

The supreme conscious *īśvara* is similar to the living entity in this way: both the consciousness of the Lord and that of the living entity are transcendental. It is not that consciousness is generated by the association of matter. That is a mistaken idea. The theory that consciousness develops under certain circumstances of material combination is not accepted in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Consciousness may be pervertedly reflected by the covering of material circumstances, just as light reflected through colored glass may appear to be a certain color, but the consciousness of the Lord is not materially affected. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "*mayādhyaṁṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ*." When He descends into the material universe, His consciousness is not materially affected. If He were so affected, He would be unfit to speak on transcendental matters as He does in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. One cannot say anything about the transcendental world without being free from materially contaminated consciousness. So the Lord is not materially contaminated. Our consciousness, at the present moment, however, is materially contaminated. The *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches that we have to purify this materially contaminated consciousness. In pure consciousness, our actions will be dovetailed to the will of *īśvara*, and that will make us happy. It is not that we have to cease all activities. Rather, our activities are to be purified, and purified activities are called *bhakti*. Activities in *bhakti* appear to be like ordinary activities, but they are not contaminated. An ignorant person

may see that a devotee is acting or working like an ordinary man, but such a person with a poor fund of knowledge does not know that the activities of the devotee or of the Lord are not contaminated by impure consciousness or matter. They are transcendental to the three modes of nature. We should know, however, that at this point our consciousness is contaminated.

When we are materially contaminated, we are called conditioned. False consciousness is exhibited under the impression that I am a product of material nature. This is called false ego. One who is absorbed in the thought of bodily conceptions cannot understand his situation. *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken to liberate one from the bodily conception of life, and Arjuna put himself in this position in order to receive this information from the Lord. One must become free from the bodily conception of life; that is the preliminary activity for the transcendentalist. One who wants to become free, who wants to become liberated, must first of all learn that he is not this material body. *Mukti* or liberation means freedom from material consciousness. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also the definition of liberation is given: *Mukti* means liberation from the contaminated consciousness of this material world and situation in pure consciousness. All the instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā* are intended to awaken this pure consciousness, and therefore we find at the last stage of the *Gītā*'s instructions that Kṛṣṇa is asking Arjuna whether he is now in purified consciousness. Purified consciousness means acting in accordance with the instructions of the Lord. This is the whole sum and substance of purified consciousness. Consciousness is already there because we are part and parcel of the Lord, but for us there is the affinity of being affected by the inferior modes. But the Lord, being the Supreme, is never affected. That is the difference between the Supreme Lord and the conditioned souls.

What is this consciousness? This consciousness is "I am." Then what am I? In contaminated consciousness "I am" means "I am the lord of all I survey. I am the enjoyer." The world revolves because every living being thinks that he is the lord and creator of the material world. Material consciousness has two psychic divisions. One is that I am the creator, and the other is that I am the enjoyer. But actually the Supreme Lord is both the creator and the enjoyer, and the living entity, being part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, is neither the creator nor the enjoyer, but a cooperator. He is the created and the enjoyed. For instance, a part of a machine cooperates with the whole machine; a part of the body cooperates with the whole body. The hands, feet, eyes, legs and so on are all parts of the body, but they

are not actually the enjoyers. The stomach is the enjoyer. The legs move, the hands supply food, the teeth chew and all parts of the body are engaged in satisfying the stomach because the stomach is the principal factor that nourishes the body's organization. Therefore everything is given to the stomach. One nourishes the tree by watering its root, and one nourishes the body by feeding the stomach, for if the body is to be kept in a healthy state, then the parts of the body must cooperate to feed the stomach. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is the enjoyer and the creator, and we, as subordinate living beings, are meant to cooperate to satisfy Him. This cooperation will actually help us, just as food taken by the stomach will help all other parts of the body. If the fingers of the hand think that they should take the food themselves instead of giving it to the stomach, then they will be frustrated. The central figure of creation and of enjoyment is the Supreme Lord, and the living entities are cooperators. By cooperation they enjoy. The relation is also like that of the master and the servant. If the master is fully satisfied, then the servant is satisfied. Similarly, the Supreme Lord should be satisfied, although the tendency to become the creator and the tendency to enjoy the material world are there also in the living entities because these tendencies are there in the Supreme Lord who has created the manifested cosmic world.

We shall find, therefore, in this *Bhagavad-gītā* that the complete whole is comprised of the supreme controller, the controlled living entities, the cosmic manifestation, eternal time, and *karma*, or activities, and all of these are explained in this text. All of these taken completely form the complete whole, and the complete whole is called the Supreme Absolute Truth. The complete whole and the complete Absolute Truth are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All manifestations are due to His different energies. He is the complete whole.

It is also explained in the *Gītā* that impersonal Brahman is also subordinate to the complete. Brahman is more explicitly explained in the *Brahma-sūtra* to be like the rays of the sunshine. The impersonal Brahman is the shining rays of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Impersonal Brahman is incomplete realization of the absolute whole, and so also is the conception of Paramātmā in the Twelfth Chapter. There it shall be seen that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Puruṣottama, is above both impersonal Brahman and the partial realization of Paramātmā. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is called *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* begins in this way: *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ/anādīr ādirgovindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*. "Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes. He is the primal cause, and He is the very form of eternal

being, knowledge and bliss." Impersonal Brahman realization is the realization of His *sat* (being) feature. Paramātmā realization is the realization of the *cit* (eternal knowledge) feature. But realization of the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is realization of all the transcendental features: *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* (being, knowledge, bliss) in complete *vigraha* (form).

People with less intelligence consider the Supreme Truth to be impersonal, but He is a transcendental person, and this is confirmed in all Vedic literatures. *Nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*. As we are all individual living beings and have our individuality, the Supreme Absolute Truth is also, in the ultimate issue, a person, and realization of the Personality of Godhead is realization of all of the transcendental features. The complete whole is not formless. If He is formless, or if He is less than any other thing, then He cannot be the complete whole. The complete whole must have everything within our experience and beyond our experience, otherwise it cannot be complete. The complete whole, Personality of Godhead, has immense potencies.

How Kṛṣṇa is acting in different potencies is also explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*. This phenomenal world or material world in which we are placed is also complete in itself because the twenty-four elements of which this material universe is a temporary manifestation, according to Sāṅkhya philosophy, are completely adjusted to produce complete resources which are necessary for the maintenance and subsistence of this universe. There is nothing extraneous; nor is there anything needed. This manifestation has its own time fixed by the energy of the supreme whole, and when its time is complete, these temporary manifestations will be annihilated by the complete arrangement of the complete. There is complete facility for the small complete units, namely the living entities, to realize the complete, and all sorts of incompleteness are experienced due to incomplete knowledge of the complete. So *Bhagavad-gītā* contains the complete knowledge of Vedic wisdom.

All Vedic knowledge is infallible, and Hindus accept Vedic knowledge to be complete and infallible. For example, cow dung is the stool of an animal, and according to *smṛti*, or Vedic injunction, if one touches the stool of an animal he has to take a bath to purify himself. But in the Vedic scriptures cow dung is considered to be a purifying agent. One might consider this to be contradictory, but it is accepted because it is Vedic injunction, and indeed by accepting this, one will not commit a mistake; subsequently it has been proved by modern science that cow dung contains all antiseptic properties. So Vedic knowledge is complete because it

is above all doubts and mistakes, and *Bhagavad-gītā* is the essence of all Vedic knowledge.

Vedic knowledge is not a question of research. Our research work is imperfect because we are researching things with imperfect senses. We have to accept perfect knowledge which comes down, as is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, by the *paramparā* disciplic succession. We have to receive knowledge from the proper source in disciplic succession beginning with the supreme spiritual master, the Lord Himself, and handed down to a succession of spiritual masters. Arjuna, the student who took lessons from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, accepts everything that He says without contradicting Him. One is not allowed to accept one portion of *Bhagavad-gītā* and not another. No. We must accept *Bhagavad-gītā* without interpretation, without deletion and without our own whimsical participation in the matter. The *Gītā* should be taken as the most perfect presentation of Vedic knowledge. Vedic knowledge is received from transcendental sources, and the first words were spoken by the Lord Himself. The words spoken by the Lord are different from words spoken by a person of the mundane world who is infected with four defects. A mundaner 1) is sure to commit mistakes, 2) is invariably illusioned, 3) has the tendency to cheat others and 4) is limited by imperfect senses. With these four imperfections, one cannot deliver perfect information of all-pervading knowledge.

Vedic knowledge is not imparted by such defective living entities. It was imparted unto the heart of Brahmā, the first created living being, and Brahmā in his turn disseminated this knowledge to his sons and disciples, as he originally received it from the Lord. The Lord is *pūrṇam*, all-perfect, and there is no possibility of His becoming subjected to the laws of material nature. One should therefore be intelligent enough to know that the Lord is the only proprietor of everything in the universe and that He is the original creator, the creator of Brahmā. In the Eleventh Chapter the Lord is addressed as *prapitāmaha* because Brahmā is addressed as *pitāmaha*, the grandfather, and He is the creator of the grandfather. So no one should claim to be the proprietor of anything; one should accept only things which are set aside for him by the Lord as his quota for his maintenance.

There are many examples given of how we are to utilize those things which are set aside for us by the Lord. This is also explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*. In the beginning, Arjuna decided that he should not fight in the Battle of Kurukṣetra. This was his own decision. Arjuna told the Lord that it was not possible for him to enjoy the kingdom after killing his own kinsmen. This decision was based on the body because he was thinking that the body was himself and that his bodily relations or expansions

were his brothers, nephews, brothers-in-law, grandfathers and so on. He was thinking in this way to satisfy his bodily demands. *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken by the Lord just to change this view, and at the end Arjuna decides to fight under the directions of the Lord when he says, "*kariṣye vacanam tava*." "I shall act according to Thy word."

In this world man is not meant to toil like hogs. He must be intelligent to realize the importance of human life and refuse to act like an ordinary animal. A human being should realize the aim of his life, and this direction is given in all Vedic literatures, and the essence is given in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Vedic literature is meant for human beings, not for animals. Animals can kill other living animals, and there is no question of sin on their part, but if a man kills an animal for the satisfaction of his uncontrolled taste, he must be responsible for breaking the laws of nature. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly explained that there are three kinds of activities according to the different modes of nature: the activities of goodness, of passion and of ignorance. Similarly, there are three kinds of eatables also: eatables in goodness, passion and ignorance. All of this is clearly described, and if we properly utilize the instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā*, then our whole life will become purified, and ultimately we will be able to reach the destination which is beyond this material sky.

That destination is called the *sanātana* sky, the eternal spiritual sky. In this material world we find that everything is temporary. It comes into being, stays for some time, produces some by-products, dwindles and then vanishes. That is the law of the material world, whether we use as an example this body, or a piece of fruit or anything. But beyond this temporary world there is another world of which we have information. This world consists of another nature which is *sanātana*, eternal. *Jīva* is also described as *sanātana*, eternal, and the Lord is also described as *sanātana* in the Eleventh Chapter. We have an intimate relationship with the Lord, and because we are all qualitatively one—the *sanātana-dhāma*, or sky, the *sanātana* Supreme Personality and the *sanātana* living entities—the whole purpose of *Bhagavad-gītā* is to revive our *sanātana* occupation, or *sanātana-dharma*, which is the eternal occupation of the living entity. We are temporarily engaged in different activities, but all of these activities can be purified when we give up all these temporary activities and take up the activities which are prescribed by the Supreme Lord. That is called our pure life.

The Supreme Lord and His transcendental abode are both *sanātana*, as are the living entities, and the combined association of the Supreme Lord and the living entities in the *sanātana* abode is the perfection of human

life. The Lord is very kind to the living entities because they are His sons. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “*sarva-yoniṣu . . . ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*.” “I am the father of all.” Of course there are all types of living entities according to their various *karmas*, but here the Lord claims that He is the father of all of them. Therefore the Lord descends to reclaim all of these fallen, conditioned souls to call them back to the *sanātana* eternal sky so that the *sanātana* living entities may regain their eternal *sanātana* positions in eternal association with the Lord. The Lord comes Himself in different incarnations, or He sends His confidential servants as sons or His associates or *ācāryas* to reclaim the conditioned souls.

Therefore, *sanātana-dharma* does not refer to any sectarian process of religion. It is the eternal function of the eternal living entities in relationship with the eternal Supreme Lord. *Sanātana-dharma* refers, as stated previously, to the eternal occupation of the living entity. Rāmānujācārya has explained the word *sanātana* as “that which has neither beginning nor end,” so when we speak of *sanātana-dharma*, we must take it for granted on the authority of Śrī Rāmānujācārya that it has neither beginning nor end.

The English word “religion” is a little different from *sanātana-dharma*. Religion conveys the idea of faith, and faith may change. One may have faith in a particular process, and he may change this faith and adopt another, but *sanātana-dharma* refers to that activity which cannot be changed. For instance, liquidity cannot be taken from water, nor can heat be taken from fire. Similarly, the eternal function of the eternal living entity cannot be taken from the living entity. *Sanātana-dharma* is eternally integral with the living entity. When we speak of *sanātana-dharma*, therefore, we must take it for granted on the authority of Śrī Rāmānujācārya that it has neither beginning nor end. That which has neither end nor beginning must not be sectarian, for it cannot be limited by any boundaries. Yet those belonging to some sectarian faith will wrongly consider that *sanātana-dharma* is also sectarian, but if we go deeply into the matter and consider it in the light of modern science, it is possible for us to see that *sanātana-dharma* is the business of all the people of the world—nay, of all the living entities of the universe.

Non-*sanātana* religious faith may have some beginning in the annals of human history, but there is no beginning to the history of *sanātana-dharma* because it remains eternally with the living entities. Insofar as the living entities are concerned, the authoritative *śāstras* state that the living entity has neither birth nor death. In the *Gītā* it is stated that the living entity is never born, and he never dies. He is eternal and indestructible, and he

continues to live after the destruction of his temporary material body. In reference to the concept of *sanātana-dharma*, we must try to understand the concept of religion from the Sanskrit root meaning of the word. *Dharma* refers to that which is constantly existing with the particular object. We conclude that there is heat and light along with the fire; without heat and light, there is no meaning to the word fire. Similarly, we must discover the essential part of the living being, that part which is his constant companion. That constant companion is his eternal quality, and that eternal quality is his eternal religion.

When Sanātana Gosvāmī asked Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu about the *svarūpa* of every living being, the Lord replied that the *svarūpa* or constitutional position of the living being is the rendering of service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If we analyze this statement of Lord Caitanya, we can easily see that every living being is constantly engaged in rendering service to another living being. A living being serves other living beings in two capacities. By doing so, the living entity enjoys life. The lower animals serve human beings as servants serve their master. A serves B master, B serves C master and C serves D master and so on. Under these circumstances, we can see that one friend serves another friend, the mother serves the son, the wife serves the husband, the husband serves the wife and so on. If we go on searching in this spirit, it will be seen that there is no exception in the society of living beings to the activity of service. The politician presents his manifesto for the public to convince them of his capacity for service. The voters therefore give the politician their valuable votes, thinking that he will render valuable service to society. The shopkeeper serves the customer, and the artisan serves the capitalist. The capitalist serves the family, and the family serves the state in the terms of the eternal capacity of the eternal living being. In this way we can see that no living being is exempt from rendering service to other living beings, and therefore we can safely conclude that service is the constant companion of the living being and that the rendering of service is the eternal religion of the living being.

Yet man professes to belong to a particular type of faith with reference to particular time and circumstance and thus claims to be a Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist or any other sect. Such designations are non-*sanātana-dharma*. A Hindu may change his faith to become a Muslim, or a Muslim may change his faith to become a Hindu, or a Christian may change his faith and so on. But in all circumstances the change of religious faith does not effect the eternal occupation of rendering service to others. The Hindu, Muslim or Christian in all circumstances is servant of someone.

Thus, to profess a particular type of sect is not to profess one's *sanātana-dharma*. The rendering of service is *sanātana-dharma*.

Factually we are related to the Supreme Lord in service. The Supreme Lord is the supreme enjoyer, and we living entities are His servitors. We are created for His enjoyment, and if we participate in that eternal enjoyment with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we become happy. We cannot become happy otherwise. It is not possible to be happy independently, just as no one part of the body can be happy without cooperating with the stomach. It is not possible for the living entity to be happy without rendering transcendental loving service unto the Supreme Lord.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, worship of different demigods or rendering service to them is not approved. It is stated in the Seventh Chapter, twentieth verse:

*kāmais tais tair hṛt-ajñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ
taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā*

"Those whose minds are distorted by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures." (Bg. 7.20) Here it is plainly said that those who are directed by lust worship the demigods and not the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. When we mention the name Kṛṣṇa, we do not refer to any sectarian name. Kṛṣṇa means the highest pleasure, and it is confirmed that the Supreme Lord is the reservoir or storehouse of all pleasure. We are all hankering after pleasure. *Ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*. (Vs. 1.1.12) The living entities, like the Lord, are full of consciousness, and they are after happiness. The Lord is perpetually happy, and if the living entities associate with the Lord, cooperate with Him and take part in His association, then they also become happy.

The Lord descends to this mortal world to show His pastimes in Vṛndāvana, which are full of happiness. When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was in Vṛndāvana, His activities with His cowherd boy friends, with His damsel friends, with the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana and with the cows were all full of happiness. The total population of Vṛndāvana knew nothing but Kṛṣṇa. But Lord Kṛṣṇa even discouraged His father Nanda Mahārāja from worshipping the demigod Indra because He wanted to establish the fact that people need not worship any demigod. They need only worship the Supreme Lord because their ultimate goal is to return to His abode.

The abode of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Fifteenth Chapter, sixth verse:

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ
yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramaṁ mama*

“That abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by electricity. And anyone who reaches it never comes back to this material world.” (Bg. 15.6)

This verse gives a description of that eternal sky. Of course we have a material conception of the sky, and we think of it in relationship to the sun, moon, stars and so on, but in this verse the Lord states that in the eternal sky there is no need for the sun nor for the moon nor fire of any kind because the spiritual sky is already illuminated by the *brahmajyoti*, the rays emanating from the Supreme Lord. We are trying with difficulty to reach other planets, but it is not difficult to understand the abode of the Supreme Lord. This abode is referred to as Goloka. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is beautifully described: *Goloka eva nivasaty akhilātma-bhūtaḥ*. The Lord resides eternally in His abode Goloka, yet He can be approached from this world, and to this end the Lord comes to manifest His real form, *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. When He manifests this form, there is no need for our imagining what He looks like. To discourage such imaginative speculation, He descends and exhibits Himself as He is, as Śyāmasundara. Unfortunately, the less intelligent deride Him because He comes as one of us and plays with us as a human being. But because of this we should not consider that the Lord is one of us. It is by His potency that He presents Himself in His real form before us and displays His pastimes, which are prototypes of those pastimes found in His abode.

In the effulgent rays of the spiritual sky there are innumerable planets floating. The *brahmajyoti* emanates from the supreme abode, Kṛṣṇaloka, and the *ānandamaya-cinmaya* planets, which are not material, float in those rays. The Lord says, *na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramaṁ mama*. One who can approach that spiritual sky is not required to descend again to the material sky. In the material sky, even if we approach the highest planet (Brahmaloka), what to speak of the moon, we will find the same conditions of life, namely birth, death, disease and old age. No planet in the material universe is free from these four principles of material existence. Therefore the Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *ābrahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna*. The living entities are traveling from one planet to another, not by mechanical arrangement but by a spiritual process. This is also mentioned: *yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ*. No mechanical arrangement is necessary if we want interplanetary travel. The *Gītā* instructs: *yānti deva-vratā devān*. The

moon, the sun and higher planets are called *svargaloka*. There are three different statuses of planets: higher, middle and lower planetary systems. The earth belongs to the middle planetary system. *Bhagavad-gītā* informs us how to travel to the higher planetary systems (*devaloka*) with a very simple formula: *yānti deva-vratā devān*. One need only worship the particular demigod of that particular planet and in that way go to the moon, the sun or any of the higher planetary systems.

Yet *Bhagavad-gītā* does not advise us to go to any of the planets in this material world because even if we go to Brahmaloka, the highest planet, through some sort of mechanical contrivance by maybe traveling for forty thousand years (and who would live that long?), we will still find the material inconveniences of birth, death, disease and old age. But one who wants to approach the supreme planet, Kṛṣṇaloka, or any of the other planets within the spiritual sky, will not meet with these material inconveniences. Amongst all of the planets in the spiritual sky there is one supreme planet called Goloka Vṛndāvana, which is the original planet in the abode of the original Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All of this information is given in *Bhagavad-gītā*, and we are given through its instruction information how to leave the material world and begin a truly blissful life in the spiritual sky.

In the Fifteenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the real picture of the material world is given. It is said there:

*ūrdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākhām aśvattham prāhur avyayam
chandāmsi yasya parṇāni yas taṁ veda sa veda-vit*

"The Supreme Lord said: There is a banyan tree which has its roots upward and its branches down, and the Vedic hymns are its leaves. One who knows this tree is the knower of the *Vedas*." (Bg. 15.1) Here the material world is described as a tree whose roots are upwards and branches are below. We have experience of a tree whose roots are upward: if one stands on the bank of a river or any reservoir of water, he can see that the trees reflected in the water are upside down. The branches go downward and the roots upward. Similarly, this material world is a reflection of the spiritual world. The material world is but a shadow of reality. In the shadow there is no reality or substantiality, but from the shadow we can understand that there is substance and reality. In the desert there is no water, but the mirage suggests that there is such a thing as water. In the material world there is no water, there is no happiness, but the real water of actual happiness is there in the spiritual world.

The Lord suggests that we attain the spiritual world in the following manner:

*nirmāna-mohā jita-saṅga-doṣā
adhyātma-nityā vinivṛtta-kāmāḥ
dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha-saṁjñair
gacchanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayam tat.*

That *padam avyayam* or eternal kingdom can be reached by one who is *nirmāna-moha*. What does this mean? We are after designations. Someone wants to become a son, someone wants to become Lord, someone wants to become the president or a rich man or a king or something else. As long as we are attached to these designations, we are attached to the body because designations belong to the body. But we are not these bodies, and realizing this is the first stage in spiritual realization. We are associated with the three modes of material nature, but we must become detached through devotional service to the Lord. If we are not attached to devotional service to the Lord, then we cannot become detached from the modes of material nature. Designations and attachments are due to our lust and desire, our wanting to lord it over the material nature. As long as we do not give up this propensity of lording it over material nature, there is no possibility of returning to the kingdom of the Supreme, the *sanātana-dhāma*. That eternal kingdom, which is never destroyed, can be approached by one who is not bewildered by the attractions of false material enjoyments, who is situated in the service of the Supreme Lord. One so situated can easily approach that supreme abode.

Elsewhere in the *Gītā* it is stated:

*avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas tam āhuḥ paramām gatim
yam prāpya na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama.*

Avyakta means unmanifested. Not even all of the material world is manifested before us. Our senses are so imperfect that we cannot even see all of the stars within this material universe. In Vedic literature we can receive much information about all the planets, and we can believe it or not believe it. All of the important planets are described in Vedic literatures, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the spiritual world, which is beyond this material sky, is described as *avyakta*, unmanifested. One should desire and hanker after that supreme kingdom, for when one attains that kingdom, he does not have to return to this material world.

Next, one may raise the question of how one goes about approaching that abode of the Supreme Lord. Information of this is given in the Eighth Chapter. It is said there:

*anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktvā kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvam yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ*

“Anyone who quits his body, at the end of life, remembering Me, attains immediately to My nature; and there is no doubt of this.” (Bg. 8.5) One who thinks of Kṛṣṇa at the time of his death goes to Kṛṣṇa. One must remember the form of Kṛṣṇa; if he quits his body thinking of this form, he approaches the spiritual kingdom. *Mad-bhāvam* refers to the supreme nature of the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*—eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. Our present body is not *sac-cid-ānanda*. It is *asat*, not *sat*. It is not eternal; it is perishable. It is not *cit*, full of knowledge, but it is full of ignorance. We have no knowledge of the spiritual kingdom, nor do we even have perfect knowledge of this material world where there are so many things unknown to us. The body is also *nirānanda*; instead of being full of bliss it is full of misery. All of the miseries we experience in the material world arise from the body, but one who leaves this body thinking of the Supreme Personality of Godhead at once attains a *sac-cid-ānanda* body, as is promised in this fifth verse of the Eighth Chapter where Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “He attains My nature.”

The process of quitting this body and getting another body in the material world is also organized. A man dies after it has been decided what form of body he will have in the next life. Higher authorities, not the living entity himself, make this decision. According to our activities in this life, we either rise or sink. This life is a preparation for the next life. If we can prepare, therefore, in this life to get promotion to the kingdom of God, then surely, after quitting this material body, we will attain a spiritual body just like the Lord.

As explained before, there are different kinds of transcendentalists, the *brahmavādī*, *paramātmavādī*, and the devotee, and, as mentioned, in the *brahmajyoti* (spiritual sky) there are innumerable spiritual planets. The number of these planets is far, far greater than all of the planets of this material world. This material world has been approximated as only one quarter of the creation. In this material segment there are millions and billions of universes with trillions of planets and suns, stars and moons. But this whole material creation is only a fragment of the total creation. Most of the creation is in the spiritual sky. One who desires to merge into

the existence of the Supreme Brahman is at once transferred to the *brahmajyoti* of the Supreme Lord and thus attains the spiritual sky. The devotee, who wants to enjoy the association of the Lord, enters into the *Vaikuṇṭha* planets, which are innumerable, and the Supreme Lord by His plenary expansions as *Nārāyaṇa* with four hands and with different names like *Pradyumna*, *Aniruddha*, *Govinda*, etc., associates with him there. Therefore at the end of life the transcendentalists either think of the *brahmajyoti*, the *Paramātmā* or the Supreme Personality of Godhead *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*. In all cases they enter into the spiritual sky, but only the devotee, or he who is in personal touch with the Supreme Lord, enters into the *Vaikuṇṭha* planets. The Lord further adds that of this "there is no doubt." This must be believed firmly. We should not reject that which does not tally with our imagination; our attitude should be that of *Arjuna*: "I believe everything that You have said." Therefore when the Lord says that at the time of death whoever thinks of Him as Brahman or *Paramātmā* or as the Personality of Godhead certainly enters into the spiritual sky, there is no doubt about it. There is no question of disbelieving it.

The information on how to think of the Supreme Being at the time of death is also given in the *Gītā*:

*yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitāḥ*

"In whatever condition one quits his present body, in his next life he will attain to that state of being without fail." (Bg. 8.6) Material nature is a display of one of the energies of the Supreme Lord. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* the total energies of the Supreme Lord as *Viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā*, etc., are delineated. The Supreme Lord has diverse and innumerable energies which are beyond our conception; however, great learned sages or liberated souls have studied these energies and have analyzed them into three parts. All of the energies are of *Viṣṇu-śakti*, that is to say they are different potencies of Lord *Viṣṇu*. That energy is *parā*, transcendental. Living entities also belong to the superior energy, as has already been explained. The other energies, or material energies, are in the mode of ignorance. At the time of death we can either remain in the inferior energy of this material world, or we can transfer to the energy of the spiritual world.

In life we are accustomed to thinking either of the material or the spiritual energy. There are so many literatures which fill our thoughts with the material energy—newspapers, novels, etc. Our thinking, which is

now absorbed in these literatures, must be transferred to the Vedic literatures. The great sages, therefore, have written so many Vedic literatures such as the *Purāṇas*, etc. The *Purāṇas* are not imaginative; they are historical records. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛita* there is the following verse:

*māyā mugdha jīver nāhi svataḥ kṛṣṇa-jñān
jīvera kṛpāya kailā kṛṣṇa veda-purāṇa*

(Cc. Madhya 20.122)

The forgetful living entities or conditioned souls have forgotten their relationship with the Supreme Lord, and they are engrossed in thinking of material activities. Just to transfer their thinking power to the spiritual sky, Kṛṣṇa has given a great number of Vedic literatures. First He divided the *Vedas* into four, then He explained them in the *Purāṇas*, and for less capable people He wrote the *Mahābhārata*. In the *Mahābhārata* there is given the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Then all Vedic literature is summarized in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and for future guidance He gave a natural commentation on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, called *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We must always engage our minds in reading these Vedic literatures. Just as materialists engage their minds in reading newspapers, magazines and so many materialistic literatures, we must transfer our reading to these literatures which are given to us by Vyāsadeva; in that way it will be possible for us to remember the Supreme Lord at the time of death. That is the only way suggested by the Lord, and He guarantees the result: "There is no doubt." (Bg. 8.7)

*tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmāra yudhya ca
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir mām evaiṣyasy asaṁśayaḥ*

"Therefore, Arjuna, you should always think of Me, and at the same time you should continue your prescribed duty and fight. With your mind and activities always fixed on Me, and everything engaged in Me, you will attain to Me without any doubt."

He does not advise Arjuna to simply remember Him and give up his occupation. No, the Lord never suggests anything impractical. In this material world, in order to maintain the body one has to work. Human society is divided, according to work, into four divisions of social order—*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*. The *brāhmaṇa* class or intelligent class is working in one way, the *kṣatriya* or administrative class is working in another way, and the mercantile class and the laborers are all tending to their specific duties. In the human society, whether one is a laborer, merchant, warrior, administrator, or farmer, or even if one belongs to the highest class and is a literary man, a scientist or a theologian, he has to work in order to maintain his existence. The Lord therefore tells Arjuna that he need not give up his occupation, but while he is engaged in his

occupation he should remember Kṛṣṇa. If he doesn't practice remembering Kṛṣṇa while he is struggling for existence, then it will not be possible for him to remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of death. Lord Caitanya also advises this. He says that one should practice remembering the Lord by chanting the names of the Lord always. The names of the Lord and the Lord are nondifferent. So Lord Kṛṣṇa's instruction to Arjuna to "remember Me" and Lord Caitanya's injunction to always "chant the names of Lord Kṛṣṇa" are the same instruction. There is no difference, because Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's name are nondifferent. In the absolute status there is no difference between reference and referent. Therefore we have to practice remembering the Lord always, twenty-four hours a day, by chanting His names and molding our life's activities in such a way that we can remember Him always.

How is this possible? The *ācāryas* give the following example. If a married woman is attached to another man, or if a man has an attachment for a woman other than his wife, then the attachment is to be considered very strong. One with such an attachment is always thinking of the loved one. The wife who is thinking of her lover is always thinking of meeting him, even while she is carrying out her household chores. In fact, she carries out her household work even more carefully so her husband will not suspect her attachment. Similarly, we should always remember the supreme lover, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and at the same time perform our material duties very nicely. A strong sense of love is required here. If we have a strong sense of love for the Supreme Lord, then we can discharge our duty and at the same time remember Him. But we have to develop that sense of love. Arjuna, for instance, was always thinking of Kṛṣṇa; he was the constant companion of Kṛṣṇa, and at the same time he was a warrior. Kṛṣṇa did not advise him to give up fighting and go to the forest to meditate. When Lord Kṛṣṇa delineates the *yoga* system to Arjuna, Arjuna says that the practice of this system is not possible for him.

arjuna uvāca

*yo 'yaṁ yogas tvayā proktaḥ sāmyena madhusūdana
etasyāhaṁ na paśyāmi cañcalatvāt sthitiṁ sthirām*

"Arjuna said, O Madhusūdana, the system of *yoga* which you have summarized appears impractical and unendurable to me, for the mind is restless and unsteady." (Bg. 6.33)

But the Lord says:

*yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gaṇāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ*

"Of all *yogīs*, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in *yoga*, and is the highest of all." (Bg. 6.47) So one who thinks of the Supreme Lord always is the greatest *yogī*, the supermost *jñānī*, and the greatest devotee at the same time. The Lord further tells Arjuna that as a *kṣatriya* he cannot give up his fighting, but if Arjuna fights remembering Kṛṣṇa, then he will be able to remember Him at the time of death. But one must be completely surrendered in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.

We work not with our body, actually, but with our mind and intelligence. So if the intelligence and the mind are always engaged in the thought of the Supreme Lord, then naturally the senses are also engaged in His service. Superficially, at least, the activities of the senses remain the same, but the consciousness is changed. The *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches one how to absorb the mind and intelligence in the thought of the Lord. Such absorption will enable one to transfer himself to the kingdom of the Lord. If the mind is engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service, then the senses are automatically engaged in His service. This is the art, and this is also the secret of *Bhagavad-gītā*: total absorption in the thought of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Modern man has struggled very hard to reach the moon, but he has not tried very hard to elevate himself spiritually. If one has fifty years of life ahead of him, he should engage that brief time in cultivating this practice of remembering the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This practice is the devotional process of:

*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*

These nine processes, of which the easiest is *śravaṇam*, hearing *Bhagavad-gītā* from the realized person, will turn one to the thought of the Supreme Being. This will lead to *nīścala*, remembering the Supreme Lord, and will enable one, upon leaving the body, to attain a spiritual body which is just fit for association with the Supreme Lord.

The Lord further says:

*abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena cetasā nānya-gāminā
paramaṁ puruṣaṁ divyaṁ yāti pārthānucintayan*

"By practicing this remembering, without being deviated, thinking ever of the Supreme Godhead, one is sure to achieve the planet of the Divine, the Supreme Personality, O son of Kuntī." (Bg. 8.8)

This is not a very difficult process. However, one must learn it from an experienced person, from one who is already in the practice. The mind is always flying to this and that, but one must always practice concentrating the mind on the form of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa or on the sound of His name. The mind is naturally restless, going hither and thither, but it can rest in the sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa. One must thus meditate on *paramaṁ puruṣaṁ*, the Supreme Person, and thus attain Him. The ways and the means for ultimate realization, ultimate attainment, are stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and the doors of this knowledge are open for everyone. No one is barred out. All classes of men can approach the Lord by thinking of Him, for hearing and thinking of Him is possible for everyone.

The Lord further says:

*mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parām gatim*

*kiṁ punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā
anityam asukhaṁ lokam imaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām*

“O son of Prthā, anyone who will take shelter in Me, whether a woman, or a merchant, or one born in a low family, can yet approach the supreme destination. How much greater then are the *brāhmaṇas*, the righteous, the devotees, and saintly kings! In this miserable world, these are fixed in devotional service to the Lord.” (Bg. 9.32-33)

Human beings even in the lower statuses of life (a merchant, a woman or a laborer) can attain the Supreme. One does not need highly developed intelligence. The point is that anyone who accepts the principle of *bhakti-yoga* and accepts the Supreme Lord as the *summum bonum* of life, as the highest target, the ultimate goal, can approach the Lord in the spiritual sky. If one adopts the principles enunciated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, he can make his life perfect and make a perfect solution to all the problems of life which arise out of the transient nature of material existence. This is the sum and substance of the entire *Bhagavad-gītā*.

In conclusion, *Bhagavad-gītā* is a transcendental literature which one should read very carefully. It is capable of saving one from all fear.

*nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*

“In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear.” (Bg.

2.40) If one reads *Bhagavad-gītā* sincerely and seriously, then all of the reactions of his past misdeeds will not react upon him. In the last portion of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa proclaims:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

"Give up all varieties of religiousness, and just surrender unto Me; and in return I shall protect you from all sinful reactions. Therefore, you have nothing to fear." (Bg. 18.66) Thus the Lord takes all responsibility for one who surrenders unto Him, and He indemnifies all the reactions of sin.

One cleanses himself daily by taking a bath in water, but one who takes his bath only once in the sacred Ganges water of the *Bhagavad-gītā* cleanses away all the dirt of material life. Because *Bhagavad-gītā* is spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one need not read any other Vedic literature. One need only attentively and regularly hear and read *Bhagavad-gītā*. In the present age, mankind is so absorbed with mundane activities that it is not possible to read all of the Vedic literatures. But this is not necessary. This one book, *Bhagavad-gītā*, will suffice because it is the essence of all Vedic literatures and because it is spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is said that one who drinks the water of the Ganges certainly gets salvation, but what to speak of one who drinks the waters of *Bhagavad-gītā*? *Gītā* is the very nectar of the *Mahābhārata* spoken by Viṣṇu Himself, for Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original Viṣṇu. It is nectar emanating from the mouth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the Ganges is said to be emanating from the lotus feet of the Lord. Of course there is no difference between the mouth and the feet of the Supreme Lord, but in our position we can appreciate that the *Bhagavad-gītā* is even more important than the Ganges.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* is just like a cow, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is a cowherd boy, is milking this cow. The milk is the essence of the *Vedas*, and Arjuna is just like a calf. The wise men, the great sages and pure devotees, are to drink the nectarean milk of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

In this present day, man is very eager to have one scripture, one God, one religion, and one occupation. So let there be one common scripture for the whole world—*Bhagavad-gītā*. And let there be one God only for the whole world—Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And one *mantra* only—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. And let there be one work only—the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

THE DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION

Evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarāyo viduḥ. (Bhagavad-gītā, 4.2)
 This *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* is received through this disciplic succession:

1) Kṛṣṇa, 2) Brahmā, 3) Nārada; 4) Vyāsa, 5) Madhva, 6) Padmanābha, 7) Nṛhari, 8) Mādhava, 9) Akṣobhya, 10) Jayatīrtha, 11) Jñānasindhu, 12) Dayānidhi, 13) Vidyānidhi, 14) Rājendra, 15) Jayadharmā, 16) Puruṣottama, 17) Brahmanya-tīrtha, 18) Vyāsa-tīrtha, 19) Lakṣmīpati, 20) Mādhavendra Purī, 21) Śvara Purī, (Nityānanda, Advaita), 22) Lord Caitanya, 23) Rūpa (Svarūpa, Sanātana), 24) Raghunātha, Jīva, 25) Kṛṣṇadāsa, 26) Narottama, 27) Viśvanātha, 28) (Baladeva) Jagannātha, 29) Bhaktivinoda, 30) Gaurakīśora, 31) Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, 32) His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī Prabhupāda.

CHAPTER ONE



Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra

TEXT 1

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच ।

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥१॥

TRANSLATION

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O Sañjaya, after assembling in the place of pilgrimage at Kurukṣetra, what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do, being desirous to fight?

TEXT 2

सञ्जय उवाच ।
 दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डुवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
 आचार्यमुपसंगम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥२॥

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: O King, after looking over the army gathered by the sons of Pāṇḍu, King Duryodhana went to his teacher and began to speak the following words:

TEXT 3

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
 व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥३॥

TRANSLATION

O my teacher, behold the great army of the sons of Pāṇḍu, so expertly arranged by your intelligent disciple, the son of Drupada.

TEXT 4

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
 युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥४॥

TRANSLATION

Here in this army there are many heroic bowmen equal in fighting to Bhīma and Arjuna; there are also great fighters like Yuyudhāna, Virāṭa and Drupada.

TEXT 5

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
 पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥५॥

TRANSLATION

There are also great, heroic, powerful fighters like Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna, Kāśirāja, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Śaibya.

TEXT 6

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।

सौमद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥६॥

TRANSLATION

There are the mighty Yudhāmanyu, the very powerful Uttamaujā, the son of Subhadra and the sons of Draupadī. All these warriors are great chariot fighters.

TEXT 7

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।

नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते ॥७॥

TRANSLATION

O best of the brāhmaṇas, for your information, let me tell you about the captains who are especially qualified to lead my military force.

TEXT 8

भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिजयः ।

अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥८॥

TRANSLATION

There are personalities like yourself, Bhīṣma, Karṇa, Kṛpa, Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa and the son of Somadatta called Bhuriśravā, who are always victorious in battle.

TEXT 9

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

There are many other heroes who are prepared to lay down their lives for my sake. All of them are well equipped with different kinds of weapons, and all are experienced in military science.

TEXT 10

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

Our strength is immeasurable, and we are perfectly protected by Grandfather Bhīṣma, whereas the strength of the Pāṇḍavas, carefully protected by Bhīma, is limited.

TEXT 11

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११ ॥

TRANSLATION

Now all of you must give full support to Grandfather Bhīṣma, standing at your respective strategic points in the phalanx of the army.

TEXT 12

तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२ ॥

TRANSLATION

Then Bhīṣma, the great valiant grandsire of the Kuru dynasty, the grandfather of the fighters, blew his conchshell very loudly like the sound of a lion, giving Duryodhana joy.

TEXT 13

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

After that, the conchshells, bugles, trumpets, drums and horns were all suddenly sounded, and the combined sound was tumultuous.

TEXT 14

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

On the other side, both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, stationed on a great chariot drawn by white horses, sounded their transcendental conchshells.

TEXT 15

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनंजयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Then, Lord Kṛṣṇa blew His conchshell, called Pāñcājanya; Arjuna blew his, the Devadatta; and Bhīma, the voracious eater and performer of Herculean tasks, blew his terrific conchshell called Pauṇḍram.

TEXTS 16-18

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
 नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १६ ॥
 काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
 धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १७ ॥
 द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
 सौमद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥ १८ ॥

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kuntī, blew his conchshell, the Anantavijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva blew the Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka. That great archer the King of Kāśī, the great fighter Śikhandī, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa and the unconquerable Sātyaki, Drupada, the sons of Draupadī, and the others, O King, such as the son of Subhadrā, greatly armed, all blew their respective conchshells.

TEXT 19

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।
 नमश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलोऽभ्यनुनादयन् ॥ १९ ॥

TRANSLATION

The blowing of these different conchshells became uproarious, and thus, vibrating both in the sky and on the earth, it shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

TEXT 20

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान्कपिध्वजः ।
 प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ।
 हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ॥ २० ॥

TRANSLATION

O King, at that time Arjuna, the son of Pāṇḍu, who was seated in his chariot, his flag marked with Hanumān, took up his bow and prepared to shoot his arrows, looking at the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. O King, Arjuna then spoke to Hṛṣīkeśa [Kṛṣṇa] these words:

TEXTS 21-22

अर्जुन उवाच ।
 सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥२१॥
 यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।
 कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन्नणसमुद्यमे ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O infallible one, please draw my chariot between the two armies so that I may see who is present here, who is desirous of fighting, and with whom I must contend in this great battle attempt.

TEXT 23

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
 धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

Let me see those who have come here to fight, wishing to please the evil-minded son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

TEXT 24

सञ्जय उवाच ।
 एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
 सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

Saṅjaya said: O descendant of Bharata, being thus addressed by Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa drew up the fine chariot in the midst of the armies of both parties.

TEXT 25

भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरुनिति ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

In the presence of Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all other chieftains of the world, Hṛṣīkesa, the Lord, said, Just behold, Pārtha, all the Kurus who are assembled here.

TEXT 26

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।
आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातृन्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ।
श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ॥ २६ ॥

TRANSLATION

There Arjuna could see, within the midst of the armies of both parties, his fathers, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends, and also his father-in-law and well-wishers—all present there.

TEXT 27

तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्वन्धूनांश्चस्थितान् ।
कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ॥ २७ ॥

TRANSLATION

When the son of Kuntī, Arjuna, saw all these different grades of friends and relatives, he became overwhelmed with compassion and spoke thus:

TEXT 28

अर्जुन उवाच ।
दृष्ट्वैमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ।
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: My dear Kṛṣṇa, seeing my friends and relatives present before me in such a fighting spirit, I feel the limbs of my body quivering and my mouth drying up.

TEXT 29

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ।
गाण्डीवं संसते हस्ताच्चक्रेव परिदह्यते ॥ २९ ॥

TRANSLATION

My whole body is trembling, and my hair is standing on end. My bow Gāṇḍīva is slipping from my hand, and my skin is burning.

TEXT 30

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ।
निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

I am now unable to stand here any longer. I am forgetting myself, and my mind is reeling. I foresee only evil, O killer of the Keśi demon.

TEXT 31

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ।
न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ॥३१॥

TRANSLATION

I do not see how any good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle, nor can I, my dear Kṛṣṇa, desire any subsequent victory, kingdom, or happiness.

TEXTS 32-35

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ।
येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ॥ ३२ ॥
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ।
आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ॥ ३३ ॥
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ।
एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ॥ ३४ ॥
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते
निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रानः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ॥ ३५ ॥

TRANSLATION

O Govinda, of what avail to us are kingdoms, happiness or even life itself when all those for whom we may desire them are now arrayed in this battlefield? O Madhusūdana, when teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and all relatives are ready to give up their lives and properties and are standing before me, then why should I wish to kill them, though I may survive? O maintainer of all creatures, I am not prepared to fight with them even in exchange for the three worlds, let alone this earth.

TEXT 36

पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ।
 तस्मान्बार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान् ।
 स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥३६॥

TRANSLATION

Sin will overcome us if we slay such aggressors. Therefore it is not proper for us to kill the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and our friends. What should we gain, O Kṛṣṇa, husband of the goddess of fortune, and how could we be happy by killing our own kinsmen?

TEXTS 37-38

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
 कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ ३७ ॥
 कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
 कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥३८॥

TRANSLATION

O Janārdana, although these men, overtaken by greed, see no fault in killing one's family or quarreling with friends, why should we, with knowledge of the sin, engage in these acts?

TEXT 39

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
 धर्मो नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥३९॥

TRANSLATION

With the destruction of dynasty, the eternal family tradition is vanquished, and thus the rest of the family becomes involved in irreligious practice.

TEXT 40

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥४०॥

TRANSLATION

When irreligion is prominent in the family, O Kṛṣṇa, the women of the family become corrupt, and from the degradation of womanhood, O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, comes unwanted progeny.

TEXT 41

सङ्करो नरकार्यैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥४१॥

TRANSLATION

When there is increase of unwanted population, a hellish situation is created both for the family and for those who destroy the family tradition. In such corrupt families, there is no offering of oblations of food and water to the ancestors.

TEXT 42

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥४२॥

TRANSLATION

Due to the evil deeds of the destroyers of family tradition, all kinds of community projects and family welfare activities are devastated.

TEXT 43

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।
नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम् ॥४३॥

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa, maintainer of the people, I have heard by disciplic succession that those who destroy family traditions dwell always in hell.

TEXT 44

अहो वत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता ग्यम् ।
यद्राज्यमुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥४४॥

TRANSLATION

Alas, how strange it is that we are preparing to commit greatly sinful acts, driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness.

TEXT 45

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥४५॥

TRANSLATION

I would consider it better for the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra to kill me unarmed and unresisting, rather than fight with them.

TEXT 46

सञ्जय उवाच ।
एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः सङ्ख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥४६॥

TRANSLATION

Saṅjaya said: Arjuna, having thus spoken on the battlefield, cast aside his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot, his mind overwhelmed with grief.

SUMMARY

The First Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* is a prelude to the rest of the text. As the narration from the *Mahābhārata* continues, the opposing armies (those led respectively by the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas) now stand poised for the first battle of the great Kurukṣetra War. After the tumultuous blowing of conchshells from both sides, signaling the beginning of the battle, Arjuna requests Kṛṣṇa, who has consented to act as Arjuna's chariot driver, to draw his chariot between the two armies. Arjuna then sees, to his horror, his fathers, grandfathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons and friends in the ranks of both armies, prepared for battle. Overwhelmed with sorrow to see his intimate relatives, teachers and friends assembled in such a militant spirit, Arjuna, feeling compassion, becomes despondent and decides not to fight.

KASHMIRI



Contents of the Gītā Summarized

TEXT I

महर्षि उवाच ।

॥ कदा कुरुवादिदमहं विदुषाम् ।

विशदयति सर्वदुःखं मम ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

Krishna said: Young Arjuna full of compassion and very sorrowful, this
you beginning with tears, Madhura-datta, O son, speak the following words

TEXT II

भीमार्जुन उवाच ।

कुरुवादिदमहं विदुषाम् ।

विशदयति सर्वदुःखं मम ॥ २ ॥

THE BATTLE OF BATAVIA

On the 1st of August, 1848, the British and the Sikhs met in the battle of Batavia. The British were victorious and the Sikhs were driven back to the mountains.

THE BATTLE OF BATAVIA

The Battle of Batavia was a decisive battle in the history of the Punjab. It was fought on the 1st of August, 1848, between the British and the Sikhs. The British were led by General Sir Harry Smith and the Sikhs by the Maharaja of Punjab. The British were victorious and the Sikhs were driven back to the mountains. This battle was the last battle of the First Anglo-Sikh War. After this battle, the British and the Sikhs signed a peace treaty. The British agreed to withdraw their troops from the Punjab and the Sikhs agreed to pay a large sum of money to the British. This treaty was known as the Treaty of Lahore. The British and the Sikhs have fought many battles since then, but this was the last battle of the First Anglo-Sikh War.

CHAPTER TWO



Contents of the Gītā Summarized

TEXT 1

सञ्जय उवाच ।
तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णकुलेक्षणम् ।
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥१॥

TRANSLATION

Saṅjaya said: Seeing Arjuna full of compassion and very sorrowful, his eyes brimming with tears, Madhusūdana, Kṛṣṇa, spoke the following words.

TEXT 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Person [Bhagavān] said: My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the progressive values of life. They do not lead to higher planets, but to infamy.

TEXT 3

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥३॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Prthā, do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O chastiser of the enemy.

TEXT 4

अर्जुन उवाच ।
कथं भीष्ममहं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥४॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O killer of Madhu [Kṛṣṇa], how can I counterattack with arrows in battle men like Bhīṣma and Droṇa, who are worthy of my worship?

TEXT 5

गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
हत्वार्थकामास्तु गुरुनिहैव
भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥५॥

TRANSLATION

It is better to live in this world by begging than to live at the cost of the lives of great souls who are my teachers. Even though they are avaricious, they are nonetheless superiors. If they are killed, our spoils will be tainted with blood.

TEXT 6

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

Nor do we know which is better—conquering them or being conquered by them. The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, whom if we killed we should not care to live, are now standing before us on this battlefield.

TEXT 7

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me clearly what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.

TEXT 8

न हि प्रपश्यामि समापनुद्या-
द्यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं
राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

I can find no means to drive away this grief which is drying up my senses. I will not be able to destroy it even if I win an unrivalled kingdom on the earth with sovereignty like the demigods in heaven.

TEXT 9

सञ्जय उवाच ।
एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परंतपः ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: Having spoken thus, Arjuna, chastiser of enemies, told Kṛṣṇa, "Govinda, I shall not fight," and fell silent.

TEXT 10

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

O descendant of Bharata, at that time Kṛṣṇa, smiling, in the midst of both the armies, spoke the following words to the grief-stricken Arjuna.

TEXT 11

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ ११ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead.

TEXT 12

नत्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।

न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.

TEXT 13

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।

तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change.

TEXT 14

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.

TEXT 15

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।

समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ १५

TRANSLATION

O best among men [Arjuna], the person who is not disturbed by happiness and distress and is steady in both is certainly eligible for liberation.

TEXT 16

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are seers of the truth have concluded that of the nonexistent there is no endurance, and of the existent there is no cessation. This seers have concluded by studying the nature of both.

TEXT 17

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

Know that which pervades the entire body is indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul.

TEXT 18

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

Only the material body of the indestructible, immeasurable and eternal living entity is subject to destruction; therefore, fight, O descendant of Bharata.

TEXT 19

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

He who thinks that the living entity is the slayer or that he is slain, does not understand. One who is in knowledge knows that the self slays not nor is slain.

TEXT 20

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-
 क्षायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
 अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
 न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

For the soul there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.

TEXT 21

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।
 कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥ २१ ॥

TRANSLATION

O Pārtha, how can a person who knows that the soul is indestructible, unborn, eternal and immutable, kill anyone or cause anyone to kill?

TEXT 22

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
 नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
 तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-
 न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.

TEXT 23

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ २३ ॥

TRANSLATION

The soul can never be cut into pieces by any weapon, nor can he be burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind.

TEXT 24

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ २४ ॥

TRANSLATION

This individual soul is unbreakable and insoluble, and can be neither burned nor dried. He is everlasting, all-pervading, unchangeable, immovable and eternally the same.

TEXT 25

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २५ ॥

TRANSLATION

It is said that the soul is invisible, inconceivable, immutable, and unchangeable. Knowing this, you should not grieve for the body.

TEXT 26

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २६ ॥

TRANSLATION

If, however, you think that the soul is perpetually born and always dies, still you have no reason to lament, O mighty-armed.

TEXT 27

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २७ ॥

TRANSLATION

For one who has taken his birth, death is certain; and for one who is dead, birth is certain. Therefore, in the unavoidable discharge of your duty, you should not lament.

TEXT 28

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २८ ॥

TRANSLATION

All created beings are unmanifest in their beginning, manifest in their interim state, and unmanifest again when they are annihilated. So what need is there for lamentation?

TEXT 29

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन-
माश्चर्यवद्ब्रूदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति
श्रुत्वाऽप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९ ॥

TRANSLATION

Some look on the soul as amazing, some describe him as amazing, and some hear of him as amazing, while others, even after hearing about him, cannot understand him at all.

TEXT 30

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ ३० ॥

TRANSLATION

O descendant of Bharata, he who dwells in the body is eternal and can never be slain. Therefore you need not grieve for any creature.

TEXT 31

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ ३१ ॥

TRANSLATION

Considering your specific duty as a ksatriya, you should know that there is no better engagement for you than fighting on religious principles; and so there is no need for hesitation.

TEXT 32

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
मुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ ३२ ॥

TRANSLATION

O Pārtha, happy are the ksatriyas to whom such fighting opportunities come unsought, opening for them the doors of the heavenly planets.

TEXT 33

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥३३॥

TRANSLATION

If, however, you do not fight this religious war, then you will certainly incur sins for neglecting your duties and thus lose your reputation as a fighter.

TEXT 34

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।
संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्भरणादतिरिच्यते ॥३४॥

TRANSLATION

People will always speak of your infamy, and for one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death.

TEXT 35

भयाद्रणादुपरतं संस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥३५॥

TRANSLATION

The great generals who have highly esteemed your name and fame will think that you have left the battlefield out of fear only, and thus they will consider you a coward.

TEXT 36

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥३६॥

TRANSLATION

Your enemies will describe you in many unkind words and scorn your ability. What could be more painful for you?

TEXT 37

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥३७॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuntī, either you will be killed on the battlefield and attain the heavenly planets, or you will conquer and enjoy the earthly kingdom. Therefore get up and fight with determination.

TEXT 38

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥३८॥

TRANSLATION

Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat—and, by so doing, you shall never incur sin.

TEXT 39

एषा तेऽभिहिता साङ्ख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु ।
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥३९॥

TRANSLATION

Thus far I have declared to you the analytical knowledge of sāṅkhya philosophy. Now listen to the knowledge of yoga whereby one works without fruitive result. O son of Prthā, when you act by such intelligence, you can free yourself from the bondage of works.

TEXT 40

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥४०॥

TRANSLATION

In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear.

TEXT 41

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥४१॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus, the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.

TEXTS 42-43

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥४२॥
कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥४३॥

TRANSLATION

Men of small knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas, which recommend various fruitive activities for elevation to heavenly planets, resultant good birth, power, and so forth. Being desirous of sense gratification and opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this.

TEXT 44

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥४४॥

TRANSLATION

In the minds of those who are too attached to sense enjoyment and material opulence, and who are bewildered by such things, the resolute determination of devotional service to the Supreme Lord does not take place.

TEXT 45

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदां निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसच्चित्तो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥४५॥

TRANSLATION

The Vedas mainly deal with the subject of the three modes of material nature. Rise above these modes, O Arjuna. Be transcendental to all of them. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the Self.

TEXT 46

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुसीदके ।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥४६॥

TRANSLATION

All purposes that are served by the small pond can at once be served by the great reservoirs of water. Similarly, all the purposes of the Vedas can be served to one who knows the purpose behind them.

TEXT 47

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥४७॥

TRANSLATION

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty.

TEXT 48

योगस्यः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥४८॥

TRANSLATION

Be steadfast in yoga, O Arjuna. Perform your duty and abandon all attachment to success or failure. Such evenness of mind is called yoga.

TEXT 49

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनंजय ।
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥४९॥

TRANSLATION

O Dhanañjaya, rid yourself of all fruitive activities by devotional service, and surrender fully to that consciousness. Those who want to enjoy the fruits of their work are misers.

TEXT 50

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥५०॥

TRANSLATION

A man engaged in devotional service rids himself of both good and bad actions even in this life. Therefore strive for yoga, O Arjuna, which is the art of all work.

TEXT 51

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥५१॥

TRANSLATION

The wise, engaged in devotional service, take refuge in the Lord, and free themselves from the cycle of birth and death by renouncing the fruits of action in the material world. In this way they can attain that state beyond all miseries.

TEXT 52

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥५२॥

TRANSLATION

When your intelligence has passed out of the dense forest of delusion, you shall become indifferent to all that has been heard and all that is to be heard.

TEXT 53

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥५३॥

TRANSLATION

When your mind is no longer disturbed by the flowery language of the Vedas, and when it remains fixed in the trance of self-realization, then you will have attained the Divine consciousness.

TEXT 54

अर्जुन उवाच ।
स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किं ॥५४॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: What are the symptoms of one whose consciousness is thus merged in Transcendence? How does he speak, and what is his language? How does he sit, and how does he walk?

TEXT 55

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥५५॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: O Pārtha, when a man gives up all varieties of sense desire which arise from mental concoction, and when his mind finds satisfaction in the self alone, then he is said to be in pure transcendental consciousness.

TEXT 56

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥५६॥

TRANSLATION

One who is not disturbed in spite of the threefold miseries, who is not elated when there is happiness, and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady mind.

TEXT 57

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५७॥

TRANSLATION

He who is without attachment, who does not rejoice when he obtains good, nor lament when he obtains evil, is firmly fixed in perfect knowledge.

TEXT 58

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५८॥

TRANSLATION

One who is able to withdraw his senses from sense objects, as the tortoise draws his limbs within the shell, is to be understood as truly situated in knowledge.

TEXT 59

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥५९॥

TRANSLATION

The embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, though the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness.

TEXT 60

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥६०॥

TRANSLATION

The senses are so strong and impetuous, O Arjuna, that they forcibly carry away the mind even of a man of discrimination who is endeavoring to control them.

TEXT 61

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६१ ॥

TRANSLATION

One who restrains his senses and fixes his consciousness upon Me is known as a man of steady intelligence.

TEXT 62

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥६२॥

TRANSLATION

While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises.

TEXT 63

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥६३॥

TRANSLATION

From anger, delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost, one falls down again into the material pool.

TEXT 64

रागद्वेषविमुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥६४॥

TRANSLATION

One who can control his senses by practicing the regulated principles of freedom can obtain the complete mercy of the Lord and thus become free from all attachment and aversion.

TEXT 65

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥६५॥

TRANSLATION

For one who is so situated in the Divine consciousness, the threefold miseries of material existence exist no longer; in such a happy state, one's intelligence soon becomes steady.

TEXT 66

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥६६॥

TRANSLATION

One who is not in transcendental consciousness can have neither a controlled mind nor steady intelligence, without which there is no possibility of peace. And how can there be any happiness without peace?

TEXT 67

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नाविमिबाम्भसि ॥६७॥

TRANSLATION

As a boat on the water is swept away by a strong wind, even one of the senses on which the mind focuses can carry away a man's intelligence.

TEXT 68

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥६८॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O mighty-armed, one whose senses are restrained from their objects is certainly of steady intelligence.

TEXT 69

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
तस्यां प्राप्यति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥६९॥

TRANSLATION

What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage.

TEXT 70

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥७०॥

TRANSLATION

A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires—that enter like rivers into the ocean which is ever being filled but is always still—can alone achieve peace, and not the man who strives to satisfy such desires.

TEXT 71

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥७१॥

TRANSLATION

A person who has given up all desires for sense gratification, who lives free from desires, who has given up all sense of proprietorship and is devoid of false ego—he alone can attain real peace.

TEXT 72

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥७२॥

TRANSLATION

That is the way of the spiritual and godly life, after attaining which a man is not bewildered. Being so situated, even at the hour of death, one can enter into the kingdom of God.

The philosophical teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā*—Kṛṣṇa's instructions to the warrior Arjuna—begin in this chapter. Bewildered and perplexed as to the proper course of action, Arjuna submits himself as Kṛṣṇa's disciple and asks for instruction: "Now I am confused about duty and have lost all composure because of weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me clearly what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me."

Kṛṣṇa begins His teachings by presenting Sāṅkhya philosophy—the analytical study of matter and spirit (11–30). To alleviate Arjuna's horror at the thought of killing his relatives, Kṛṣṇa contrasts the eternality of the soul (the real self) with the temporality of the material body (the soul's outer covering). The soul (*ātmā*) is eternal. It continues to exist after the death of the material body: "For the soul there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain." (20) At death, the soul transmigrates to a new body: "As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones." (22) The wise man is he who, knowing the self to be the eternal soul, is never disturbed by the change of body ("death") and is unconcerned with the temporary pleasures and pains of the material body. Such a person is eligible for liberation from material embodiment. Since the real self is eternal and never subject to death, Arjuna should not lament his having to kill the temporary, external body in the course of discharging his duty as a *kṣatriya* (soldier). Furthermore, his duty, as a *kṣatriya*, is to fight in the battle: "Considering your specific duty as a *kṣatriya*, you should know that there is no better engagement for you than fighting on religious principles; and so there is no need for hesitation." (31)

Kṛṣṇa then explains the "art of work," *karma-yoga*. By acting out of selfless duty to the Supreme (without desire for the fruits of action), one attains liberation from material bondage (39–53). Arjuna then asks Kṛṣṇa to enumerate the characteristics of one who is self-realized and situated in detached, transcendental consciousness (54). In the remainder of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa elaborately describes the *sthita-prajñā*, the person fixed in consciousness of the Supreme. Such a person, fully cognizant of his spiritual identity and separateness from matter, is not interested in material pleasure. Thus he controls his outward senses. With controlled senses and with mind and intelligence fixed on the Supreme, he is unaffected by material dualities such as happiness and distress, loss and gain. Such a person, at the end of the present body, attains the spiritual world (55–72).

CHAPTER THREE



Karma-yoga

TEXT 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।
ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥१॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O Janārdana, O Keśava, why do You urge me to engage in this ghastly warfare, if You think that intelligence is better than fruitive work?

TEXT 2

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥२॥

TRANSLATION

My intelligence is bewildered by Your equivocal instructions. Therefore, please tell me decisively what is most beneficial for me.

TEXT 3

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मया नव ।
ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानं कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥३॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: O sinless Arjuna, I have already explained that there are two classes of men who realize the Self. Some are inclined to understand Him by empirical, philosophical speculation, and others are inclined to know Him by devotional work.

TEXT 4

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैकर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥४॥

TRANSLATION

Not by merely abstaining from work can one achieve freedom from reaction, nor by renunciation alone can one attain perfection.

TEXT 5

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥५॥

TRANSLATION

All men are forced to act helplessly according to the impulses born of the modes of material nature; therefore no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.

TEXT 6

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमृदात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥६॥

TRANSLATION

One who restrains the senses and organs of action, but whose mind dwells on sense objects, certainly deludes himself and is called a pretender.

TEXT 7

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥७॥

TRANSLATION

On the other hand, he who controls the senses by the mind and engages his active organs in works of devotion, without attachment, is by far superior.

TEXT 8

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥८॥

TRANSLATION

Perform your prescribed duty, for action is better than inaction. A man cannot even maintain his physical body without work.

TEXT 9

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥९॥

TRANSLATION

Work done as a sacrifice for Viṣṇu has to be performed, otherwise work binds one to this material world. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain unattached and free from bondage.

TEXT 10

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥१०॥

TRANSLATION

In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demigods, along with sacrifices for Viṣṇu, and blessed them by saying, "Be thou happy by this yajña [sacrifice] because its performance will bestow upon you all desirable things."

TEXT 11

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥११॥

TRANSLATION

The demigods, being pleased by sacrifices, will also please you; thus nourishing one another, there will reign general prosperity for all.

TEXT 12

इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

In charge of the various necessities of life, the demigods, being satisfied by the performance of yajña [sacrifice], supply all necessities to man. But

he who enjoys these gifts, without offering them to the demigods in return, is certainly a thief.

TEXT 13

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin.

TEXT 14

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. Rains are produced by performance of yajña [sacrifice], and yajña is born of prescribed duties.

TEXT 15

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Regulated activities are prescribed in the Vedas, and the Vedas are directly manifested from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Consequently the all-pervading Transcendence is eternally situated in acts of sacrifice.

TEXT 16

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

My dear Arjuna, a man who does not follow this prescribed Vedic system of sacrifice certainly leads a life of sin, for a person delighting only in the senses lives in vain.

TEXT 17

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

One who is, however, taking pleasure in the self, who is illumined in the self, who rejoices in and is satisfied with the self only, fully satiated—for him there is no duty.

TEXT 18

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

A self-realized man has no purpose to fulfill in the discharge of his prescribed duties, nor has he any reason not to perform such work. Nor has he any need to depend on any other living being.

TEXT 19

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore, without being attached to the fruits of activities, one should act as a matter of duty; for by working without attachment, one attains the Supreme.

TEXT 20

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

Even kings like Janaka and others attained the perfectional stage by performance of prescribed duties. Therefore, just for the sake of educating the people in general, you should perform your work.

TEXT 21

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.

TEXT 22

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Prthā, there is no work prescribed for Me within all the three planetary systems. Nor am I in want of anything, nor have I need to obtain anything—and yet I am engaged in work.

TEXT 23

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

For, if I did not engage in work, O Pārtha, certainly all men would follow My path.

TEXT 24

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

If I should cease to work, then all these worlds would be put to ruination. I would also be the cause of creating unwanted population, and I would thereby destroy the peace of all sentient beings.

TEXT 25

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथाऽसक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

As the ignorant perform their duties with attachment to results, similarly the learned may also act, but without attachment, for the sake of leading people on the right path.

TEXT 26

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

Let not the wise disrupt the minds of the ignorant who are attached to fruitive action. They should not be encouraged to refrain from work, but to engage in work in the spirit of devotion.

TEXT 27

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

The bewildered spirit soul, under the influence of the three modes of material nature, thinks himself to be the doer of activities, which are in actuality carried out by nature.

TEXT 28

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

One who is in knowledge of the Absolute Truth, O mighty-armed, does not engage himself in the senses and sense gratification, knowing well the differences between work in devotion and work for fruitive results.

TEXT 29

प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

Bewildered by the modes of material nature, the ignorant fully engage themselves in material activities and become attached. But the wise should

not unsettle them, although these duties are inferior due to the performers' lack of knowledge.

TEXT 30

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O Arjuna, surrendering all your works unto Me, with mind intent on Me, and without desire for gain and free from egoism and lethargy, fight.

TEXT 31

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनमूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥३१॥

TRANSLATION

One who executes his duties according to My injunctions and who follows this teaching faithfully, without envy, becomes free from the bondage of fruitive actions.

TEXT 32

ये त्वेतदभ्यमूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढास्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥३२॥

TRANSLATION

But those who, out of envy, disregard these teachings and do not practice them regularly, are to be considered bereft of all knowledge, befooled, and doomed to ignorance and bondage.

TEXT 33

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥३३॥

TRANSLATION

Even a man of knowledge acts according to his own nature, for every-one follows his nature. What can repression accomplish?

TEXT 34

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥३४॥

TRANSLATION

Attraction and repulsion for sense objects are felt by embodied beings, but one should not fall under the control of senses and sense objects because they are stumbling blocks on the path of self-realization.

TEXT 35

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥३५॥

TRANSLATION

It is far better to discharge one's prescribed duties, even though they may be faulty, than another's duties. Destruction in the course of performing one's own duty is better than engaging in another's duties, for to follow another's path is dangerous.

TEXT 36

अर्जुन उवाच ।
अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥३६॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, by what is one impelled to sinful acts, even unwillingly, as if engaged by force?

TEXT 37

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
 काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
 महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥३७॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the material modes of passion and later transformed into wrath, and which is the all-devouring, sinful enemy of this world.

TEXT 38

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
 यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥३८॥

TRANSLATION

As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, or as the embryo is covered by the womb, similarly, the living entity is covered by different degrees of this lust.

TEXT 39

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
 कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥३९॥

TRANSLATION

Thus, a man's pure consciousness is covered by his eternal enemy in the form of lust, which is never satisfied and which burns like fire.

TEXT 40

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥४०॥

TRANSLATION

The senses, the mind and the intelligence are the sitting places of this lust, which veils the real knowledge of the living entity and bewilders him.

TEXT 41

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥४१॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore, O Arjuna, best of the Bhāratas, in the very beginning curb this great symbol of sin [lust] by regulating the senses, and slay this destroyer of knowledge and self-realization.

TEXT 42

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥४२॥

TRANSLATION

The working senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the mind; and he [the soul] is even higher than the intelligence.

TEXT 43

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ४३ ॥

TRANSLATION

Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to material senses, mind and intelligence, one should control the lower self by the higher self and thus—by spiritual strength—conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust.

SUMMARY

In the last section of this chapter, Arjuna asks, “By what is one impelled to sinful acts, even unwillingly, as if engaged by force?” (36) Kṛṣṇa answers that it is lust (material desire)—the “destroyer of knowledge and self-realization”—which incites sinful acts, and He prescribes the method to conquer it: sense regulation inspired by spiritual self-knowledge. The senses (*indriyas*), mind (*manas*) and intelligence (*buddhi*) are the repositories of lust. Knowing the self to be transcendental to the material senses, mind and intelligence, “one should control the lower self by the higher self and thus—by spiritual strength—conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust.” (37–43)

At the opening of the Third Chapter, Arjuna is confused by Kṛṣṇa's instructions in the previous chapter. He has misconceived that Kṛṣṇa's telling him to control his senses and fix his mind and intelligence on the Supreme is incompatible with the performance of action. Therefore he questions why Kṛṣṇa is requesting him to engage in warfare (1–2). In response, Kṛṣṇa explains *karma-yoga*, the performance of actions free from desire for selfish, fruitive gain and dedicated to the Supreme (Kṛṣṇa) (3–35).

Karma, or fruitive work, brings both material enjoyment and material suffering. Whether the results of action are pleasant or unpleasant, however, they bind one to the bondage of repeated birth and death in the material world. Kṛṣṇa explains further that inaction is insufficient to save one from material reactions (and subsequent bondage to the material world). By nature, everyone is forced to act. Even to maintain the physical body, one must work. Therefore, one should work in a way that will

not further entangle one in material bondage, but will lead to ultimate liberation. That art of work is *karma-yoga*—working and acting under the direction of the Supreme (Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa) for His satisfaction: “Work done as a sacrifice to Viṣṇu has to be performed, otherwise work binds one to this material world. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain unattached and free from bondage.” (9) As described in later chapters of the *Gītā*, *karma-yoga* gradually elevates one to *bhakti-yoga*, or pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

Next follows a discussion of *yajña* (sacrifice)—duties, prescribed in the *Vedas*, which gradually purify and elevate the performer from fruitive to spiritual activities (10–16). One who is fully self-realized no longer needs to perform such duties, for he is already fully purified and thus his duty is self-illuminated by the Lord. He should continue, however, to perform duties non-fruitively, to set a good example for those attached to the fruits of work (17–29). Concluding His instructions on *karma-yoga* and *yajña*, Kṛṣṇa commands Arjuna: “Surrendering all your works unto Me, with mind intent on Me, and without desire for gain and free from egoism and lethargy—fight.” Then Kṛṣṇa sums up why he should (30–35).

CHAPTER FOUR



Transcendental Knowledge

TEXT 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥१॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku.

TEXT 2

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥२॥

TRANSLATION

This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost.

TEXT 3

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥३॥

TRANSLATION

That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend; therefore you can understand the transcendental mystery of this science.

TEXT 4

अर्जुन उवाच ।
अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥४॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: The sun-god Vivasvān is senior by birth to You. How am I to understand that in the beginning You instructed this science to him?

TEXT 5

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥५॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O subduer of the enemy!

TEXT 6

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥६॥

TRANSLATION

Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all sentient beings, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form.

TEXT 7

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥७॥

TRANSLATION

Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself.

TEXT 8

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥८॥

TRANSLATION

In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.

TEXT 9

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥९॥

TRANSLATION

One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.

TEXT 10

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥१०॥

TRANSLATION

Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me—and thus they all attained transcendental love for Me.

TEXT 11

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥११॥

TRANSLATION

All of them—as they surrender unto Me—I reward accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Prthā.

TEXT 12

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

Men in this world desire success in fruitive activities, and therefore they worship the demigods. Quickly, of course, men get results from fruitive work in this world.

TEXT 13

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

According to the three modes of material nature and the work ascribed to them, the four divisions of human society were created by Me. And, although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable.

TEXT 14

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

There is no work that affects Me; nor do I aspire for the fruits of action. One who understands this truth about Me also does not become entangled in the fruitive reactions of work.

TEXT 15

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

All the liberated souls in ancient times acted with this understanding and so attained liberation. Therefore, as the ancients, you should perform your duty in this divine consciousness.

TEXT 16

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
तच्चे कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

Even the intelligent are bewildered in determining what is action and what is inaction. Now I shall explain to you what action is, knowing which you shall be liberated from all sins.

TEXT 17

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

The intricacies of action are very hard to understand. Therefore one should know properly what action is, what forbidden action is, and what inaction is.

TEXT 18

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

One who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is intelligent among men, and he is in the transcendental position, although engaged in all sorts of activities.

TEXT 19

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

One is understood to be in full knowledge whose every act is devoid of desire for sense gratification. He is said by sages to be a worker whose fruitive action is burned up by the fire of perfect knowledge.

TEXT 20

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

Abandoning all attachment to the results of his activities, ever satisfied and independent, he performs no fruitive action, although engaged in all kinds of undertakings.

TEXT 21

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।
शरीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नामोति किल्बिषम् ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

Such a man of understanding acts with mind and intelligence perfectly controlled, gives up all sense of proprietorship over his possessions and acts only for the bare necessities of life. Thus working, he is not affected by sinful reactions.

TEXT 22

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

He who is satisfied with gain which comes of its own accord, who is free from duality and does not envy, who is steady both in success and failure, is never entangled, although performing actions.

TEXT 23

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

The work of a man who is unattached to the modes of material nature and who is fully situated in transcendental knowledge merges entirely into transcendence.

TEXT 24

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म कर्म समाधिना ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

A person who is fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is sure to attain the spiritual kingdom because of his full contribution to spiritual activities, in which the consummation is absolute and that which is offered is of the same spiritual nature.

TEXT 25

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।
ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुहति ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

Some yogīs perfectly worship the demigods by offering different sacrifices to them, and some of them offer sacrifices in the fire of the Supreme Brahman.

TEXT 26

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुहति ।
शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुहति ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

Some of them sacrifice the hearing process and the senses in the fire of the controlled mind, and others sacrifice the objects of the senses, such as sound, in the fire of sacrifice.

TEXT 27

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।
आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुहति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are interested in self-realization, in terms of mind and sense control, offer the functions of all the senses, as well as the vital force [breath], as oblations into the fire of the controlled mind.

TEXT 28

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

There are others who, enlightened by sacrificing their material possessions in severe austerities, take strict vows and practice the yoga of eightfold mysticism, and others study the Vedas for the advancement of transcendental knowledge.

TEXT 29

अपाने जुहति प्राणं प्राणेष्वपानं तथापरे ।

प्राणापानगती रुद्धा प्राणायामपरायणाः ।
अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

And there are even others who are inclined to the process of breath restraint to remain in trance, and they practice stopping the movement of the outgoing breath into the incoming, and incoming breath into the outgoing, and thus at last remain in trance, stopping all breathing. Some of them, curtailing the eating process, offer the outgoing breath into itself, as a sacrifice.

TEXT 30

सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ।
यज्ञशिष्टामृतधुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

All these performers who know the meaning of sacrifice become cleansed of sinful reaction, and, having tasted the nectar of the remnants of such sacrifice, they go to the supreme eternal atmosphere.

TEXT 31

नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥३१॥

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kuru dynasty, without sacrifice one can never live happily on this planet or in this life: what then of the next?

TEXT 32

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान्बुद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥३२॥

TRANSLATION

All these different types of sacrifice are approved by the Vedas, and all of them are born of different types of work. Knowing them as such, you will become liberated.

TEXT 33

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥३३॥

TRANSLATION

O chastiser of the enemy, the sacrifice of knowledge is greater than the sacrifice of material possessions. O son of Prthā, after all, the sacrifice of work culminates in transcendental knowledge.

TEXT 34

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥३४॥

TRANSLATION

Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.

TEXT 35

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।
येन भूतान्यशेषाणि द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥३५॥

TRANSLATION

And when you have thus learned the truth, you will know that all living beings are but part of Me—and that they are in Me, and are Mine.

TEXT 36

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव बृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥३६॥

TRANSLATION

Even if you are considered to be the most sinful of all sinners, when you are situated in the boat of transcendental knowledge, you will be able to cross over the ocean of miseries.

TEXT 37

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥३७॥

TRANSLATION

As the blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all reactions to material activities.

TEXT 38

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥३८॥

TRANSLATION

In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time.

TEXT 39

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥३९॥

TRANSLATION

A faithful man who is absorbed in transcendental knowledge and who subdues his senses quickly attains the supreme spiritual peace.

TEXT 40

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥४०॥

TRANSLATION

But ignorant and faithless persons who doubt the revealed scriptures do not attain God consciousness. For the doubting soul there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next.

TEXT 41

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय ॥४१॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore, one who has renounced the fruits of his action, whose doubts are destroyed by transcendental knowledge, and who is situated firmly in the self, is not bound by works, O conqueror of riches.

TEXT 42

तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।
छिन्नैवं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥४२॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore the doubts which have arisen in your heart out of ignorance should be slashed by the weapon of knowledge. Armed with yoga, O Bhārata, stand and fight.

SUMMARY

In the previous chapter, *karma-yoga* (non-fruitive action) and *yajña* (sacrifice) were recommended for spiritual elevation. Now, in the Fourth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa explains that *jñāna-yoga*—elevation to God consciousness through the cultivation of spiritual knowledge—is higher, because both *karma-yoga* and *yajña* culminate in such transcendental knowledge. Transcendental knowledge—knowledge concerning God, the *jīva* (individual soul) and their eternal relationship—is elaborated in this chapter of the *Gītā*.

Kṛṣṇa first mentions the history of the oral transmission of the *Gītā* (originating with Himself) through disciplic succession (*paramparā*). Because in time the succession was broken, Kṛṣṇa is now speaking the *Gītā* again to Arjuna, who, as Kṛṣṇa's devotee, is qualified to understand "the transcendental mystery of this science." (1-3) In the following verses, Kṛṣṇa explains His transcendental nature as the Supreme Lord and the reason for His periodic descents to the mundane realm (to re-establish *dharma*, or religious principles) (4-8). One who understands the transcendental nature of His appearance and activities attains liberation (9). Those who take refuge in Him are purified by such knowledge and achieve love for Him (10). Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with the *jīvas* in accordance with their degree of surrender unto Him (11).

In verses 14 through 24, Kṛṣṇa again explains the intricacies of action and how, by being situated in transcendental knowledge, one becomes free from karmic reactions. The learned man, in full knowledge that his self is spiritual and subordinate to the Supreme, renounces self-interested actions and acts only for the Supreme. Giving up all sense of proprietorship over his possessions and acting only for the bare necessities of life, he is unaffected by the reactions of work.

Kṛṣṇa describes different types of sacrifice recommended in the *Vedas* (25-32) and states that they all culminate in transcendental knowledge (33). He then reveals the process for attaining transcendental knowledge (by approaching a self-realized *guru*), and He explains what that ultimate knowledge is (that all *jīvas* are part of Kṛṣṇa) (34-35). Transcendental knowledge destroys karmic reactions and brings attainment of "the supreme spiritual peace" (36-39). Those without faith in transcendental knowledge, however, attain neither happiness nor God consciousness (40). In conclusion, Kṛṣṇa commands Arjuna to destroy his doubts by spiritual knowledge: "Armed with *yoga*," he tells Arjuna, "stand and fight." (41-42)

CHAPTER FIVE



Karma-yoga— Action in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

TEXT 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।
संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, first of all You ask me to renounce work, and then again You recommend work with devotion. Now will You kindly tell me definitely which of the two is more beneficial?

TEXT 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: The renunciation of work and work in devotion are both good for liberation. But, of the two, work in devotional service is better than renunciation of works.

TEXT 3

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

One who neither hates nor desires the fruits of his activities is known to be always renounced. Such a person, liberated from all dualities, easily overcomes material bondage and is completely liberated, O mighty-armed Arjuna.

TEXT 4

साङ्ख्ययोगौ पृथग्वालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

Only the ignorant speak of karma-yoga and devotional service as being different from the analytical study of the material world [sāṅkhya]. Those who are actually learned say that he who applies himself well to one of these paths achieves the results of both.

TEXT 5

यत्साङ्ख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं साङ्ख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

One who knows that the position reached by means of renunciation can also be attained by works in devotional service and who therefore sees that the path of works and the path of renunciation are one, sees things as they are.

TEXT 6

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

Unless one is engaged in the devotional service of the Lord, mere renunciation of activities cannot make one happy. The sages, purified by works of devotion, achieve the Supreme without delay.

TEXT 7

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

One who works in devotion, who is a pure soul, and who controls his mind and senses, is dear to everyone, and everyone is dear to him. Though always working, such a man is never entangled.

TEXTS 8-9

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
पश्यञ्छृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्भ्रमन्गच्छन्स्वपन्श्चसन् ॥ ८ ॥
प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्निमिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

A person in the divine consciousness, although engaged in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving about, sleeping, and breathing, always knows within himself that he actually does nothing at all. Because while speaking, evacuating, receiving, opening or closing his eyes, he always knows that only the material senses are engaged with their objects and that he is aloof from them.

TEXT 10

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥१०॥

TRANSLATION

One who performs his duty without attachment, surrendering the results unto the Supreme God, is not affected by sinful action, as the lotus leaf is untouched by water.

TEXT 11

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥११॥

TRANSLATION

The yogīs, abandoning attachment, act with body, mind, intelligence, and even with the senses, only for the purpose of purification.

TEXT 12

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्टिकीम् ।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

The steadily devoted soul attains unadulterated peace because he offers the result of all activities to Me; whereas a person who is not in union with the Divine, who is greedy for the fruits of his labor, becomes entangled.

TEXT 13

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

When the embodied living being controls his nature and mentally renounces all actions, he resides happily in the city of nine gates [the material body], neither working nor causing work to be done.

TEXT 14

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

The embodied spirit, master of the city of his body, does not create activities, nor does he induce people to act, nor does he create the fruits of action. All this is enacted by the modes of material nature.

TEXT 15

नादत्ते कस्य चित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Nor does the Supreme Spirit assume anyone's sinful or pious activities. Embodied beings, however, are bewildered because of the ignorance which covers their real knowledge.

TEXT 16

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

When, however, one is enlightened with the knowledge by which ne-science is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as the sun lights up everything in the daytime.

TEXT 17

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

When one's intelligence, mind, faith and refuge are all fixed in the Supreme, then one becomes fully cleansed of misgivings through complete knowledge and thus proceeds straight on the path of liberation.

TEXT 18

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]..

TEXT 19

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

Those whose minds are established in sameness and equanimity have already conquered the conditions of birth and death. They are flawless like Brahman, and thus they are already situated in Brahman.

TEXT 20

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

A person who neither rejoices upon achieving something pleasant nor laments upon obtaining something unpleasant, who is self-intelligent, unbewildered, and who knows the science of God, is to be understood as already situated in Transcendence.

TEXT 21

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

Such a liberated person is not attracted to material sense pleasure or external objects but is always in trance, enjoying the pleasure within. In this way the self-realized person enjoys unlimited happiness, for he concentrates on the Supreme.

TEXT 22

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

An intelligent person does not take part in the sources of misery, which are due to contact with the material senses. O son of Kuntī, such pleasures have a beginning and an end, and so the wise man does not delight in them.

TEXT 23

शक्रोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

Before giving up this present body, if one is able to tolerate the urges of the material senses and check the force of desire and anger, he is a yogī and is happy in this world.

TEXT 24

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

One whose happiness is within, who is active within, who rejoices within and is illumined within, is actually the perfect mystic. He is liberated in the Supreme, and ultimately he attains the Supreme.

TEXT 25

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

One who is beyond duality and doubt, whose mind is engaged within, who is always busy working for the welfare of all sentient beings, and who is free from all sins, achieves liberation in the Supreme.

TEXT 26

कामक्रोधविमुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are free from anger and all material desires, who are self-realized, self-disciplined and constantly endeavoring for perfection, are assured of liberation in the Supreme in the very near future.

TEXTS 27-28

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥२७॥
यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

Shutting out all external sense objects, keeping the eyes and vision concentrated between the two eyebrows, suspending the inward and outward breaths within the nostrils—thus controlling the mind, senses and intelligence, the transcendentalist becomes free from desire, fear and anger. One who is always in this state is certainly liberated.

TEXT 29

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

The sages, knowing Me as the ultimate purpose of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attain peace from the pangs of material miseries.

SUMMARY

In the Third Chapter, Kṛṣṇa explained that a person in knowledge is absolved of the need to perform prescribed duties. And, in the Fourth Chapter, He told Arjuna that all sacrificial work culminates in knowledge. At the end of the Fourth Chapter, however, Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna to fight. Now Arjuna, perplexed by Kṛṣṇa's stressing the importance both of work in devotion and of inaction in knowledge, asks Kṛṣṇa to state definitively which of the two paths is more beneficial (1). He is confused because, to him, work and renunciation appear incompatible. To clear up Arjuna's confusion, Kṛṣṇa explains, in the Fifth Chapter, that devotional work in full knowledge has no material reaction and is therefore the same as renunciation of work. Of the two, however, devotional work is better (2).

Kṛṣṇa then describes the characteristics of one who works in such an unattached manner, sacrificing the fruits of work to Him (3-17). Such a devotional worker, purified by transcendental knowledge, realizes that he is a spiritual entity. Since he is transcendental to his body, mind and senses, he does not identify with their actions. Performing actions yet renouncing their fruits unto the Supreme Lord, he is "not affected by sinful action, as the lotus leaf is untouched by water." (10) Thus he attains peace. Such an unattached actor becomes situated in transcendence, or *brahma-nirvāṇa*. Such a *paṇḍita*, or wise person, is fixed in perfect knowledge of the self and the Supreme. He sees all beings with equal vision, and he is cognizant of their spiritual nature beyond the external, material body. He works for their ultimate spiritual welfare and is unattached to the dualities of pleasure and pain. He is not attracted to material sense pleasure, but enjoys the pleasure within, concentrating on the Supreme (18-28).

In conclusion, Kṛṣṇa states that one who knows Him as the ultimate goal of all sacrifices and austerities, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds and as the best friend of all living beings attains relief from material suffering (29).

CHAPTER SIX



Sāṅkhya-yoga

TEXT 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्रिर्न चाक्रियः ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: One who is unattached to the fruits of his work and who works as he is obligated is in the renounced order of life, and he is the true mystic: not he who lights no fire and performs no work.

TEXT 2

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।

न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

What is called renunciation is the same as yoga, or linking oneself with the Supreme, for no one can become a yogī unless he renounces the desire for sense gratification.

TEXT 3

आरूक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

For one who is a neophyte in the eightfold yoga system, work is said to be the means; and for one who has already attained to yoga, cessation of all material activities is said to be the means.

TEXT 4

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

A person is said to have attained to yoga when, having renounced all material desires, he neither acts for sense gratification nor engages in fruitive activities.

TEXT 5

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

A man must elevate himself by his own mind, not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, and his enemy as well.

TEXT 6

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friend but for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the greatest enemy.

TEXT 7

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मन् समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquility. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same.

TEXT 8

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

A person is said to be established in self-realization and is called a yogi [or mystic] when he is fully satisfied by virtue of acquired knowledge and realization. Such a person is situated in transcendence and is self-controlled. He sees everything—whether it be pebbles, stones, or gold—as the same.

TEXT 9

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यवन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

A person is said to be still further advanced when he regards all—the honest well-wisher, friends and enemies, the envious, the pious, the sinner and those who are indifferent and impartial—with an equal mind.

TEXT 10

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

A transcendentalist should always try to concentrate his mind on the Supreme Self; he should live alone in a secluded place and should always carefully control his mind. He should be free from desires and feelings of possessiveness.

TEXTS 11-12

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ ११ ॥
तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ १२ ॥

TRANSLATION

To practice yoga, one should go to a secluded place and should lay kuśa-grass on the ground and then cover it with a deerskin and a soft cloth. The seat should neither be too high nor too low and should be situated in a sacred place. The yogī should then sit on it very firmly and should practice yoga by controlling the mind and the senses, purifying the heart and fixing the mind on one point.

TEXTS 13-14

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
 संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं खं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥१३॥
 प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
 मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

One should hold one's body, neck and head erect in a straight line and stare steadily at the tip of the nose. Thus, with an unagitated, subdued mind, devoid of fear, completely free from sex life, one should meditate upon Me within the heart and make Me the ultimate goal of life.

TEXT 15

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
 शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Thus practicing control of the body, mind and activities, the mystic transcendentalist attains to the kingdom of God [or the abode of Kṛṣṇa] by cessation of material existence.

TEXT 16

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।
 न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

There is no possibility of one's becoming a yogī, O Arjuna, if one eats too much, or eats too little, sleeps too much or does not sleep enough.

TEXT 17

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

He who is temperate in his habits of eating, sleeping, working and recreation can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system.

TEXT 18

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।
निस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

When the yogī, by practice of yoga, disciplines his mental activities and becomes situated in Transcendence—devoid of all material desires—he is said to have attained yoga.

TEXT 19

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।
योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

As a lamp in a windless place does not waver, so the transcendentalist, whose mind is controlled, remains always steady in his meditation on the transcendent Self.

TEXTS 20-23

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥२०॥

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
 वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥२१॥
 यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
 यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥२२॥
 तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

The stage of perfection is called trance, or samādhi, when one's mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. This is characterized by one's ability to see the self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys himself through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.

TEXT 24

स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा
 संकल्पप्रभवान्कामास्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
 मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

One should engage oneself in the practice of yoga with undeviating determination and faith. One should abandon, without exception, all material desires born of false ego and thus control all the senses on all sides by the mind.

TEXT 25

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
 आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

Gradually, step by step, with full conviction, one should become situated in trance by means of intelligence, and thus the mind should be fixed on the Self alone and should think of nothing else.

TEXT 26

यतो यतो निश्चलति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

From whatever and wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the Self.

TEXT 27

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

The yogī whose mind is fixed on Me verily attains the highest happiness. By virtue of his identity with Brahman, he is liberated; his mind is peaceful, his passions are quieted, and he is freed from sin.

TEXT 28

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

Steady in the Self, being freed from all material contamination, the yogī achieves the highest perfectional stage of happiness in touch with the Supreme Consciousness.

TEXT 29

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

A true yogī observes Me in all beings, and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized man sees Me everywhere.

TEXT 30

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me.

TEXT 31

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥३१॥

TRANSLATION

The yogī who knows that I and the Supersoul within all creatures are one worships Me and remains always in Me in all circumstances.

TEXT 32

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ३२ ॥

TRANSLATION

He is a perfect yogī who, by comparison to his own self, sees the true equality of all beings, both in their happiness and distress, O Arjuna!

TEXT 33

अर्जुन उवाच ।

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥३३॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O Madhusūdana, the system of yoga which you have summarized appears impractical and unendurable to me, for the mind is restless and unsteady.

TEXT 34

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥३४॥

TRANSLATION

For the mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate and very strong, O Kṛṣṇa, and to subdue it is, it seems to me, more difficult than controlling the wind.

TEXT 35

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥३५॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: O mighty-armed son of Kuntī, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind, but it is possible by constant practice and by detachment.

TEXT 36

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥३६॥

TRANSLATION

For one whose mind is unbridled, self-realization is difficult work. But he whose mind is controlled and who strives by right means is assured of success. That is My opinion.

TEXT 37

अर्जुन उवाच ।
अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।
अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥३७॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: What is the destination of the man of faith who does not persevere, who in the beginning takes to the process of self-realization but who later desists due to worldly-mindedness and thus does not attain perfection in mysticism?

TEXT 38

कच्चिन्नोमयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ ३८ ॥

TRANSLATION

O mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa, does not such a man, being deviated from the path of Transcendence, perish like a riven cloud, with no position in any sphere?

TEXT 39

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेतुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥ ३९ ॥

TRANSLATION

This is my doubt O Kṛṣṇa, and I ask You to dispel it completely. But for Yourself, no one is to be found who can destroy this doubt.

TEXT 40

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।
न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्गुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥४०॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: Son of Pṛthā, a transcendentalist engaged in auspicious activities does not meet with destruction either in this world or in the spiritual world; one who does good, My friend, is never overcome by evil.

TEXT 41

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥४१॥

TRANSLATION

The unsuccessful yogī, after many, many years of enjoyment on the planets of the pious living entities, is born into a family of righteous people, or into a family of rich aristocracy.

TEXT 42

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥४२॥

TRANSLATION

Or he takes his birth in a family of transcendentalists who are surely great in wisdom. Verily, such a birth is rare in this world.

TEXT 43

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥४३॥

TRANSLATION

On taking such a birth, he again revives the divine consciousness of his previous life, and he tries to make further progress in order to achieve complete success, O son of Kuru.

TEXT 44

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥४४॥

TRANSLATION

By virtue of the divine consciousness of his previous life, he automatically becomes attracted to the yogic principles—even without seeking them. Such an inquisitive transcendentalist, striving for yoga, stands always above the ritualistic principles of the scriptures.

TEXT 45

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धिकल्पिषः ।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥४५॥

TRANSLATION

But when the yogī engages himself with sincere endeavor in making further progress, being washed of all contaminations, then ultimately, after many, many births of practice, he attains the supreme goal.

TEXT 46

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥४६॥

TRANSLATION

A yogī is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances, be a yogī.

TEXT 47

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्भक्तेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्मज्जते यो मां समेयुक्ततमो मतः ॥४७॥

TRANSLATION

And of all yogīs, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshipping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all.

SUMMARY

In Chapter Six, Kṛṣṇa outlines the path of *dhyāna-yoga* (technically called *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, “the eightfold path”), a mechanical meditative practice meant to control the mind and senses and focus one’s concentration on Paramātmā (Supersoul), the form of Kṛṣṇa within the heart. After stating the importance of controlling the mind (5–6), Kṛṣṇa describes one who has done so—the *yogī*, or transcendentalist (7–9). Kṛṣṇa then summarizes the methodology and ultimate goal of the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system. Sitting postures, breathing exercises and sense and mind control culminate in *samādhi*, or consciousness fixed on the Supersoul (10–19). A *yoga-yukta*, one who has attained perfection in *yoga*, has a steady mind, fixed on the Supreme. He is liberated, his mind is peaceful, his passions are quieted, he experiences “boundless transcendental happiness,” and he is never shaken, even in the midst of the greatest difficulties. Thus he is freed from all miseries resulting from the soul’s contact with matter (20–32).

Arjuna complains, however, that the system of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* is too difficult to practice: "For the mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate and very strong, O Kṛṣṇa, and to subdue it is, it seems to me, more difficult than controlling the wind." (33-34) Kṛṣṇa replies that controlling the mind is indeed difficult, but "it is possible by constant practice and by detachment." (35-36)

Arjuna then inquires about the fate of the *yogī* who falls from *yoga* practice before attaining perfection (37-39). Kṛṣṇa replies that such an unsuccessful *yogī*, taking a future auspicious birth (in a wealthy, pious or wise family), resumes his practice and, after many births of such practice, attains perfection (40-45).

The conclusion of this Sixth Chapter and of the entire first section of *Bhagavad-gītā* is stated in two final verses: "A *yogī* is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances, be a *yogī*. And of all *yogīs*, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshipping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in *yoga* and is the highest of all." (46-47) *Yoga* (linking with the Supreme) is thus superior to asceticism (*tapasya*), fruitive work (*karma*) and empiricism (*jñāna*).

And of all paths of *yoga* (*karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, *haṭha-yoga*, *rāja-yoga*, etc.), *bhakti-yoga* (loving devotional service to Kṛṣṇa) is declared to be the culmination, the highest.

CHAPTER SEVEN



Knowledge of the Absolute

TEXT 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।

असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

Now hear, O son of Pṛthā [Arjuna], how by practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt.

TEXT 2

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge both phenomenal and noumenal, by knowing which there shall remain nothing further to be known.

TEXT 3

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.

TEXT 4

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego—altogether these eight comprise My separated material energies.

TEXT 5

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

Besides this inferior nature, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine, which are all living entities who are struggling with material nature and are sustaining the universe.

TEXT 6

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I am both its origin and dissolution.

TEXT 7

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनंजय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

O conquerer of wealth [Arjuna], there is no Truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.

TEXT 8

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuntī [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable om in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in ether and ability in man.

TEXT 9

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

I am the original fragrance of the earth, and I am the heat in fire. I am the life of all that lives, and I am the penances of all ascetics.

TEXT 10

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामसि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥१०॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Prthā, know that I am the original seed of all existences, the intelligence of the intelligent, and the prowess of all powerful men.

TEXT 11

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ।
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽसि भरतर्षभ ॥११॥

TRANSLATION

I am the strength of the strong, devoid of passion and desire. I am sex life which is not contrary to religious principles, O Lord of the Bhāratas [Arjuna].

TEXT 12

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

All states of being—be they of goodness, passion or ignorance—are manifested by My energy. I am, in one sense, everything—but I am independent. I am not under the modes of this material nature.

TEXT 13

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

Deluded by the three modes [goodness, passion and ignorance], the whole world does not know Me who am above the modes and inexhaustible.

TEXT 14

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.

TEXT 15

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।
माययापहतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons, do not surrender unto Me.

TEXT 16

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

O best among the Bhāratas [Arjuna], four kinds of pious men render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.

TEXT 17

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

Of these, the wise one who is in full knowledge in union with Me through pure devotional service is the best. For I am very dear to him, and he is dear to Me.

TEXT 18

उदाराः सर्वे एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

All these devotees are undoubtedly magnanimous souls, but he who is situated in knowledge of Me I consider verily to dwell in Me. Being engaged in My transcendental service, he attains Me.

TEXT 19

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.

TEXT 20

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

Those whose minds are distorted by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures.

TEXT 21

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

I am in everyone's heart as the Supersoul. As soon as one desires to worship the demigods, I make his faith steady so that he can devote himself to some particular deity.

TEXT 22

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हितान् ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

Endowed with such a faith, he seeks favors of a particular demigod and obtains his desires. But in actuality these benefits are bestowed by Me alone.

TEXT 23

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

Men of small intelligence worship the demigods, and their fruits are limited and temporary. Those who worship the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, but My devotees ultimately reach My supreme planet.

TEXT 24

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

Unintelligent men, who know Me not, think that I have assumed this form and personality. Due to their small knowledge, they do not know My higher nature, which is changeless and supreme.

TEXT 25

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My eternal creative potency [yoga-māyā]; and so the deluded world knows Me not, who am unborn and infallible.

TEXT 26

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

O Arjuna, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I know everything that has happened in the past, all that is happening in the present, and all things that are yet to come. I also know all living entities; but Me no one knows.

TEXT 27

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।
सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्गे यान्ति परंतप ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

O scion of Bharata [Arjuna], O conquerer of the foe, all living entities are born into delusion, overcome by the dualities of desire and hate.

TEXT 28

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

Persons who have acted piously in previous lives and in this life, whose sinful actions are completely eradicated and who are freed from the duality of delusion, engage themselves in My service with determination.

TEXT 29

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

Intelligent persons who are endeavoring for liberation from old age and death take refuge in Me in devotional service. They are actually Brahman because they entirely know everything about transcendental and fruitive activities.

TEXT 30

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

Those who know Me as the Supreme Lord, as the governing principle of the material manifestation, who know Me as the one underlying all the demigods and as the one sustaining all sacrifices, can, with steadfast mind, understand and know Me even at the time of death.

SUMMARY

In the first six chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the distinction between spirit (the living entity) and matter has been established. The living entity (*jīva*) has been described as a non-material, spiritual soul capable of elevating himself from material self-identification (*ahankāra*) to spiritual self-realization, by different types of *yoga* (the *sāṅkhya*, *karma*, *jñāna* and *aśtāṅga* systems). These *yoga* systems form a gradual progression culminating (at the end of Chapter Six) in *bhakti-yoga* (devotional service to Kṛṣṇa). The middle section of the *Gītā* (chapters seven through twelve) is chiefly concerned with Kṛṣṇa Himself (Puruṣottama, "the Supreme Personality of Godhead") and the eternal relationship of the *jīvas* with Him, based upon *bhakti-yoga*.

The Seventh Chapter is concerned with knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, the process of attaining that knowledge, and the end result of such attainment. The first three verses serve as a prelude in which Kṛṣṇa says, in essence, "Devotion to Me brings full knowledge of Me. Now I shall give you all material and spiritual knowledge, although knowledge of Me is a rare attainment." Kṛṣṇa begins by defining His two principal energies: the "inferior" energy (matter, or *aparā prakṛti*), consisting of eight material elements, and His "superior" energy (spirit, or *parā prakṛti*), consisting of the *jīvas* who are now entangled in matter (4-5). He is the "origin and dissolution" of both energies and is the Supreme Truth (6-7). Kṛṣṇa then delineates how He is manifest within all phenomena: He is "the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon . . . the intelligence of the intelligent" and so on (8-12). There are four kinds of atheists who do not surrender unto Him and four kinds of pious men who do (15-18). Those who are wise, knowing Him to be everything and the supreme cause, surrender unto Him (19). The foolish (materialists), on the other hand, surrender to demigods to attain immediate fruitive benefits, which are limited and temporary (20-23). Also unintelligent are those who conceive Kṛṣṇa's personal form to be material. His personal form, covered by *yogamāyā*, His personal covering potency, is never manifest to them (24-26). In the final four verses, Kṛṣṇa concludes that those who are pious and intelligent and who aspire for liberation from material bondage seek refuge in Him in devotional service, knowing Him to be the Supreme Lord. Such persons, Kṛṣṇa says, "can, with steadfast mind, understand and know Me even at the time of death" (and thus attain His transcendental abode in the spiritual world) (27-30).

CHAPTER EIGHT



Attaining the Supreme

TEXT 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।
किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna inquired: O my Lord, O Supreme Person, what is Brahman? What is the self? What are fruitive activities? What is this material manifestation? And what are the demigods? Please explain this to me.

TEXT 2

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

How does this Lord of sacrifice live in the body, and in which part does He live, O Madhusūdāna? And how can those engaged in devotional service know You at the time of death?

TEXT 3

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said, The indestructible, transcendental living entity is called Brahman, and his eternal nature is called the self. Action pertaining to the development of these material bodies is called karma, or fruitive activities.

TEXT 4

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

Physical nature is known to be endlessly mutable. The universe is the cosmic form of the Supreme Lord, and I am that Lord represented as the Supersoul, dwelling in the heart of every embodied being.

TEXT 5

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

And whoever, at the time of death, quits his body, remembering Me alone, at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt.

TEXT 6

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail.

TEXT 7

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मा मे वैष्यस्य संशयः ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore, Arjuna, you should always think of Me in the form of Kṛṣṇa and at the same time carry out your prescribed duty of fighting. With your activities dedicated to Me and your mind and intelligence fixed on Me, you will attain Me without doubt.

TEXT 8

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

He who meditates on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his mind constantly engaged in remembering Me, undeviated from the path, he, O Pārtha [Arjuna], is sure to reach Me.

TEXT 9

कविं पुराणमनुशासितार-
मणोरणीयांसमनुसरेद्यः ।

सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूप-
मादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

One should meditate upon the Supreme Person as the one who knows everything, as He who is the oldest, who is the controller, who is smaller than the smallest, who is the maintainer of everything, who is beyond all material conception, who is inconceivable, and who is always a person. He is luminous like the sun and, being transcendental, is beyond this material nature.

TEXT 10

प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन
भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्य-
क्स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

One who, at the time of death, fixes his life air between the eyebrows and in full devotion engages himself in remembering the Supreme Lord, will certainly attain to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 11

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति
विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति
तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११ ॥

TRANSLATION

Persons learned in the Vedas, who utter omkāra and who are great sages in the renounced order, enter into Brahman. Desiring such perfection, one practices celibacy. I shall now explain to you this process by which one may attain salvation.

TEXT 12

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्ध्न्याध्यात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणां ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

The yogic situation is that of detachment from all sensual engagements. Closing all the doors of the senses and fixing the mind on the heart and the life air at the top of the head, one establishes himself in yoga.

TEXT 13

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

After being situated in this yoga practice and vibrating the sacred syllable om, the supreme combination of letters, if one thinks of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and quits his body, he will certainly reach the spiritual planets.

TEXT 14

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

For one who remembers Me without deviation, I am easy to obtain, O son of Prthā, because of his constant engagement in devotional service.

TEXT 15

माप्नुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

After attaining Me, the great souls, who are yogīs in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection.

TEXT 16

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
माश्रुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.

TEXT 17

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्षद्रह्मणो विदुः ।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

By human calculation, a thousand ages taken together is the duration of Brahmā's one day. And such also is the duration of his night.

TEXT 18

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

When Brahmā's day is manifest, this multitude of living entities comes into being, and at the arrival of Brahmā's night they are all annihilated.

TEXT 19

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

Again and again the day comes, and this host of beings is active; and again the night falls, O Pārtha, and they are helplessly dissolved.

TEXT 20

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

Yet there is another nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.

TEXT 21

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

That supreme abode is called unmanifested and infallible, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is My supreme abode.

TEXT 22

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is greater than all, is attainable by unalloyed devotion. Although He is present in His abode, He is all-pervading, and everything is situated within Him.

TEXT 23

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

O best of the Bhāratas, I shall now explain to you the different times at which, passing away from this world, one does or does not come back.

TEXT 24

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्रः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

Those who know the Supreme Brahman pass away from the world during the influence of the fiery god, in the light, at an auspicious moment, during the fortnight of the moon and the six months when the sun travels in the north.

TEXT 25

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

The mystic who passes away from this world during the smoke, the night, the moonless fortnight, or in the six months when the sun passes to the south, or who reaches the moon planet, again comes back.

TEXT 26

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्यया वर्तते पुनः ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

According to the Vedas, there are two ways of passing from this world—one in light and one in darkness. When one passes in light, he does not come back; but when one passes in darkness, he returns.

TEXT 27

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

The devotees who know these two paths, O Arjuna, are never bewildered. Therefore be always fixed in devotion.

TEXT 28

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव
दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा
योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

A person who accepts the path of devotional service is not bereft of the results derived from studying the Vedas, performing austere sacrifices, giving charity or pursuing philosophical and fruitive activities. At the end he reaches the supreme abode.

SUMMARY

The Eighth Chapter of the *Gītā* is almost exclusively concerned with the moment of death—the moment of the *jīva*'s passing from the material body. At the beginning of the chapter, Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa seven questions: "Arjuna inquired: O my Lord, O Supreme Person, what is Brahman? What are fruitive activities? What is the material manifestation? And what are the demigods? Please explain this to me. How does this Lord of sacrifice live in the body, and in which part does He live, O Madhusūdana? And how can those engaged in devotional service know You at the time of death?" (1–2) Kṛṣṇa replies to the first seven questions very briefly (3–4), for He has earlier dealt with them at length. But His reply to the last question (concerning remembrance of Kṛṣṇa at the time of death) continues to the end of the chapter.

Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that whoever leaves the body remembering Him attains His abode (5). The quality of one's consciousness at the time of death determines one's next destination (6). Since the content of one's thoughts and memories at death is influenced, in turn, by one's consciousness and activities during life, Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna to think of Him constantly, even in the course of his prescribed duties (7–8). By such constant meditation, one reaches Kṛṣṇa after quitting the body. In verse nine, Kṛṣṇa instructs how one should meditate on Him. In the next four verses (10–13), Kṛṣṇa describes the arduous *aśtāṅga-yoga* method of meditation on Kṛṣṇa for the attainment of spiritual planets. Kṛṣṇa then concludes that He is attained most easily by one who is unflinchingly devoted to Him (the *bhakti-yogī*) (14). After reaching Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world, the *bhakti-yogī* never returns to the material world, which is full of miseries (15–16). Beyond the material world, which is perpetually created and destroyed, is the transcendental world, Kṛṣṇa's eternal and supreme abode, upon attaining which one never returns to the material world (17–21). One attains this supreme destination, Kṛṣṇa reiterates, by pure devotion (22). Next, Kṛṣṇa describes how different kinds of *yogīs* leave their bodies at particular auspicious moments to attain elevation to celestial planets or liberation. The *bhakti-yogī*, however, is indifferent to such processes (23–27). In conclusion, Kṛṣṇa declares that His devotee, the *bhakti-yogī*, is not bereft of the results of other systems of spiritual advancement. At the time of death, he returns to Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental world (28).

CHAPTER NINE



The Most Confidential Knowledge

TEXT 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear Arjuna, because you are never envious of Me, I shall impart to you this most secret wisdom, knowing which you shall be relieved of the miseries of material existence.

TEXT 2

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।

प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.

TEXT 3

अश्रद्धाणाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are not faithful on the path of devotional service cannot attain Me, O conqueror of foes, but return to birth and death in this material world.

TEXT 4

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them.

TEXT 5

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

And yet everything that is created does not rest in Me. Behold My mystic opulence! Although I am the maintainer of all living entities, and although I am everywhere, still My Self is the very source of creation.

TEXT 6

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

As the mighty wind, blowing everywhere, always rests in ethereal space, know that in the same manner all beings rest in Me.

TEXT 7

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuntī, at the end of the millennium every material manifestation enters into My nature, and at the beginning of another millennium, by My potency I again create.

TEXT 8

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

The whole cosmic order is under Me. By My will it is manifested again and again, and by My will it is annihilated at the end.

TEXT 9

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनंजय ।
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

O Dhanañjaya, all this work cannot bind Me. I am ever detached, seated as though neutral.

TEXT 10

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः स्रूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥१०॥

TRANSLATION

This material nature is working under My direction, O son of Kuntī, and it is producing all moving and unmoving beings. By its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.

TEXT 11

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥११॥

TRANSLATION

Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be.

TEXT 12

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are thus bewildered are attracted by demonic and atheistic views. In that deluded condition, their hopes for liberation, their fruitive activities, and their culture of knowledge are all defeated.

TEXT 13

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Pṛthā, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible.

TEXT 14

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ताउपासते ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion.

TEXT 15

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Others, who are engaged in the cultivation of knowledge, worship the Supreme Lord as the one without a second, diverse in many, and in the universal form.

TEXT 16

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
मंत्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

But it is I who am the ritual, I the sacrifice, the offering to the ancestors, the healing herb, the transcendental chant. I am the butter and the fire and the offering.

TEXT 17

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।
वेद्यं पवित्रमोँकार ऋक् साम यजुरेव च ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

I am the father of this universe, the mother, the support, and the grand-sire. I am the object of knowledge, the purifier and the syllable om. I am also the Rk, the Sāma, and the Yajur [Vedas].

TEXT 18

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

I am the goal, the sustainer, the master, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the most dear friend. I am the creation and the annihilation, the basis of everything, the resting place and the eternal seed.

TEXT 19

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षे निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

O Arjuna, I control heat, the rain and the drought. I am immortality, and I am also death personified. Both being and nonbeing are in Me.

TEXT 20

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोक-
मश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

Those who study the Vedas and drink the soma juice, seeking the heavenly planets, worship Me indirectly. They take birth on the planet of Indra, where they enjoy godly delights.

TEXT 21

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना
गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

When they have thus enjoyed heavenly sense pleasure, they return to this mortal planet again. Thus, through the Vedic principles, they achieve only flickering happiness.

TEXT 22

अनन्याधिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

But those who worship Me with devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack and preserve what they have.

TEXT 23

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

Whatever a man may sacrifice to other gods, O son of Kuntī, is really meant for Me alone, but it is offered without true understanding.

TEXT 24

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

I am the only enjoyer and the only object of sacrifice. Those who do not recognize My true transcendental nature fall down.

TEXT 25

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितृन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; those who worship ancestors go to the ancestors; and those who worship Me will live with Me.

TEXT 26

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.

TEXT 27

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuntī, all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me.

TEXT 28

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।
संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मां विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

In this way you will be freed from all reactions to good and evil deeds, and by this principle of renunciation you will be liberated and come to Me.

TEXT 29

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him.

TEXT 30

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

Even if one commits the most abominable actions, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated.

TEXT 31

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥३१॥

TRANSLATION

He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.

TEXT 32

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिं ॥३२॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Prthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—women, vaiśyas [merchants], as well as śūdras [workers]—can approach the supreme destination.

TEXT 33

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥३३॥

TRANSLATION

How much greater then are the brāhmaṇas, the righteous, the devotees and saintly kings who in this temporary miserable world engage in loving service unto Me.

TEXT 34

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

माभेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ३४ ॥

TRANSLATION

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.

SUMMARY

Earlier in *Bhagavad-gītā*, knowledge concerning the difference between the soul and the body has been described as “confidential.” Now, in the Ninth Chapter, *rāja-vidyā* (“the king of knowledge”) and *rāja-guhyam* (“the most confidential knowledge”)—knowledge concerning the eternal, constitutional function or activity of the soul—is explained. That eternal, constitutional function (*sanātana-dharma*) is described throughout the *Gītā*, and in the Ninth Chapter in particular, as *bhakti*, or transcendental devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, “the Supreme Personality of Godhead” (Puruṣottama).

In the beginning of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa says that He will now impart “the most secret wisdom,” which will relieve Arjuna (whose firm faith in Kṛṣṇa qualifies him to receive these teachings) from all miseries (1–3). Kṛṣṇa then explains that the whole cosmic creation rests within Him. Yet although He is the source, maintainer and controller of the universe, He remains transcendental and detached from it (4–10). Kṛṣṇa next describes the fools (*mūḍhas*), ignorant of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental supremacy, who deride His personal humanlike form, and He contrasts them with the great souls (*mahātmās*), aware of His divinity, who worship Him with devotion (11–14).

Kṛṣṇa then describes different types of worshipers—worshipers of impersonal Brahman, of demigods and of the universal form—and He describes Himself as the actual and ultimate object of worship (15–21), the protector of His devotees (22) and the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices to the demigods (23–24). Other worshipers attain the abodes of their objects of worship, but “those who worship Me will live with Me.” (25)

In the final verses of Chapter Nine, Kṛṣṇa talks about His devotees. By making Him the object of all actions, offerings and austerities, His devotee is freed from the bondage of *karma* and attains Him (26–28). Although impartial, Kṛṣṇa favors those who serve Him in love (29). Even if a devotee does ill, he is still to be considered saintly, for he is “properly situated”; the process of devotional service itself will elevate him to righteousness and ultimate perfection (30–31). Furthermore, even persons considered to be of lower classes can attain Kṛṣṇa by seeking shelter in Him, what to speak of those of high birth (32–33). In conclusion, Kṛṣṇa declares that one who is completely devoted to Him attains Him: “Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, engage your body in My service, and surrender unto Me. Completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.” (34)

CHAPTER TEN



The Opulence of the Absolute

TEXT 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said: My dear friend, mighty-armed Arjuna, listen again to My supreme word, which I shall impart to you for your benefit and which will give you great joy.

TEXT 2

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

Neither the hosts of demigods nor the great sages know My origin, for, in every respect, I am the source of the demigods and the sages.

TEXT 3

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

He who knows Me as the unborn, as the beginningless, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds—he, undeluded among men, is freed from all sins.

TEXTS 4-5

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।
सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥ ४ ॥
अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from doubt and delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, self-control and calmness, pleasure and pain, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, nonviolence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame and infamy are created by Me alone.

TEXT 6

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

The seven great sages and before them the four other great sages and the Manus [progenitors of mankind] are born out of My mind, and all creatures in these planets descend from them.

TEXT 7

एतां विश्रुतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
सोऽविकल्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

He who knows in truth this glory and power of Mine engages in unalloyed devotional service; of this there is no doubt.

TEXT 8

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this perfectly engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.

TEXT 9

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are surrendered to Me, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss enlightening one another and conversing about Me.

TEXT 10

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.

TEXT 11

तेषामेवानुक्म्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ ११ ॥

TRANSLATION

Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance.

TEXTS 12-13

अर्जुन उवाच ।
परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विशुम् ॥ १२ ॥
आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा ।
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ १३ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Brahman, the ultimate, the supreme abode and purifier, the Absolute Truth and the eternal divine person. You are the primal God, transcendental and original, and You are the unborn and all-pervading beauty. All the great sages such as Nārada, Asita, Devala, and Vyāsa proclaim this of You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me.

TEXT 14

सर्वमेतद्वत्तं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।
न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवान दानवाः ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa, I totally accept as truth all that You have told me. Neither the gods nor demons, O Lord, know Thy personality.

TEXT 15

खयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Indeed, You alone know Yourself by Your own potencies, O origin of all, Lord of all beings, God of gods, O Supreme Person, Lord of the universe!

TEXT 16

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।
याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

Please tell me in detail of Your divine powers by which You pervade all these worlds and abide in them.

TEXT 17

कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

How should I meditate on You? In what various forms are You to be contemplated, O Blessed Lord?

TEXT 18

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन ।
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

Tell me again in detail, O Janārdana [Kṛṣṇa], of Your mighty potencies and glories, for I never tire of hearing Your ambrosial words.

TEXT 19

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।
प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: Yes, I will tell you of My splendorous manifestations, but only of those which are prominent, O Arjuna, for My opulence is limitless.

TEXT 20

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

I am the Self, O Guḍākeśa, seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings.

TEXT 21

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।
मरीचिर्मस्तामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

Of the Ādityas I am Viṣṇu, of lights I am the radiant sun, I am Marīci of the Maruts, and among the stars I am the moon.

TEXT 22

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।
इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

Of the Vedas I am the Sāma-veda; of the demigods I am Indra; of the senses I am the mind, and in living beings I am the living force [knowledge].

TEXT 23

रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।
वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

Of all the Rudras I am Lord Śiva; of the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas I am the lord of wealth [Kuvera]; of the Vasus I am fire [Agni], and of the mountains I am Meru.

TEXT 24

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम् ।
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

Of priests, O Arjuna, know Me to be the chief, Bṛhaspati, the lord of devotion. Of generals I am Skanda, the lord of war; and of bodies of water I am the ocean.

TEXT 25

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम् ।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

Of the great sages I am Bṛgu; of vibrations I am the transcendental om. Of sacrifices I am the chanting of the holy names [japa], and of immovable things I am the Himalayas.

TEXT 26

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

Of all trees I am the holy fig tree, and amongst sages and demigods I am Nārada. Of the singers of the gods [Gandharvas] I am Citraratha, and among perfected beings I am the sage Kapila.

TEXT 27

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।
येरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

Of horses know Me to be Uccaiṣravā, who rose out of the ocean, born of the elixir of immortality; of lordly elephants I am Airāvata, and among men I am the monarch.

TEXT 28

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामसि कामधुक् ।
प्रजनश्चासि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामसि वासुकिः ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

Of weapons I am the thunderbolt; among cows I am the surabhi, givers of abundant milk. Of procreators I am Kandarpa, the god of love, and of serpents I am Vāsuki, the chief.

TEXT 29

अनन्तश्चासि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।
पितृणामर्यमा चासि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

Of the celestial Nāga snakes I am Ananta; of the aquatic deities I am Varuṇa. Of departed ancestors I am Aryamā, and among the dispensers of law I am Yama, lord of death.

TEXT 30

प्रह्लादश्चासि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

Among the Daitya demons I am the devoted Prahlaḍa; among subduers I am time; among the beasts I am the lion, and among birds I am Garuḍa, the feathered carrier of Viṣṇu.

TEXT 31

पवनः पवतामसि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चासि स्रोतसामसि जाडवी ॥ ३१ ॥

TRANSLATION

Of purifiers I am the wind; of the wielders of weapons I am Rama; of fishes I am the shark, and of flowing rivers I am the Ganges.

TEXT 32

सर्गणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥ ३२ ॥

TRANSLATION

Of all creations I am the beginning and the end and also the middle, O Arjuna. Of all sciences I am the spiritual science of the Self, and among logicians I am the conclusive truth.

TEXT 33

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताऽहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥ ३३ ॥

TRANSLATION

Of letters I am the letter A, and among compounds I am the dual word. I am also inexhaustable time, and of creators I am Brahmā, whose manifold faces turn everywhere.

TEXT 34

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।
कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक् नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ ३४ ॥

TRANSLATION

I am all-devouring death, and I am the generator of all things yet to be. Among women I am fame, fortune, speech, memory, intelligence, faithfulness and patience.

TEXT 35

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।
मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥३५॥

TRANSLATION

Of hymns I am the *Bṛhat-sāma* sung to the Lord Indra, and of poetry I am the *Gāyatrī* verse, sung daily by *brāhmaṇas*. Of months I am November and December, and of seasons I am flower-bearing spring.

TEXT 36

द्यूतं छलयतामसि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।
जयोऽसि व्यवसायोऽसि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥३६॥

TRANSLATION

I am also the gambling of cheats, and of the splendid I am the splendor. I am victory, I am adventure, and I am the strength of the strong.

TEXT 37

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽसि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः ।
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥३७॥

TRANSLATION

Of the descendants of *Vṛṣṇi* I am *Vāsudeva*, and of the *Pāṇḍavas* I am *Arjuna*. Of the sages I am *Vyāsa*, and among great thinkers I am *Uśanā*.

TEXT 38

दण्डो दमयतामसि नीतिरसि जिगीषताम् ।
मौनं चैवासि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥३८॥

TRANSLATION

Among punishments I am the rod of chastisement, and of those who seek victory, I am morality. Of secret things I am silence, and of the wise I am wisdom.

TEXT 39

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्थान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥३९॥

TRANSLATION

Furthermore, O Arjuna, I am the generating seed of all existences. There is no being—moving or unmoving—that can exist without Me.

TEXT 40

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।
एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥४०॥

TRANSLATION

O mighty conqueror of enemies, there is no end to My divine manifestations. What I have spoken to you is but a mere indication of My infinite opulences.

TEXT 41

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽंशसंभवम् ॥४१॥

TRANSLATION

Know that all beautiful, glorious, and mighty creations spring from but a spark of My splendor.

TEXT 42

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।
विष्टम्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥४२॥

TRANSLATION

But what need is there, Arjuna, for all this detailed knowledge? With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe.

SUMMARY

Beginning with the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa has explained His different energies (matter and spirit). Here, in the Tenth Chapter, He explains to Arjuna His specific opulences, manifested in His all-pervasive energies.

Kṛṣṇa begins by asserting that those who are wise, knowing Him as the Supreme Lord and the original source of everything, are freed from all reactions to sins. They engage themselves in pure, motive-less devotional service to Him (2-8). The sublime characteristics of such pure devotees are then described (9). Kṛṣṇa dispels the ignorance of those who are so devoted and leads them to Him (10-11). Verses 8 through 11, traditionally known as *catuḥ-ślokī* (the four verses), are considered the essence of the *Gītā*'s teachings. Those who know Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord and fully surrender unto Him in pure devotion are directly enlightened by Him and shown the way to attain Him.

Arjuna emphatically declares his acceptance of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Absolute Truth, and his total acceptance of all that Kṛṣṇa has thus far instructed (12-15). Then he requests Kṛṣṇa to describe in detail His divine opulences "by which You pervade all these worlds and abide in them." (16-18) Kṛṣṇa's ensuing description of His principal opulences continues to the conclusion of the chapter. Of lights He is the radiant sun, of bodies of water the ocean, of immovable things the Himalayas. He is the wisdom of the wise, the strength of the strong, the splendor of the splen-

did. All wondrous phenomena manifesting great power, beauty, grandeur and sublimeness, in the material or spiritual world, are simply fragmental manifestations of His divine energies and opulence. Kṛṣṇa, thus being the cause of all causes, is the supreme object of worship for all beings (19-41).

In the final verse of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa says that more important than knowledge of His separate opulences is the understanding that these and all things exist due to His entering them as Supersoul (Paramātmā), by which He pervades and supports the entire universe (42).

TRANSLATION

But what need is there, Arjuna, for all this detailed knowledge? With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe.

SUMMARY

Beginning with the Seventh Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa has explained His different energies (matter and spirit). Here, in the Tenth Chapter, He explains to Arjuna His specific opulences, manifested in His all-pervasive energies.

Kṛṣṇa begins by asserting that those who are wise, knowing Him as the Supreme Lord and the original source of everything, are freed from all taints to sin. They engage themselves in pure, motiveless devotional service to Him (1-8). The sublime characteristics of such pure devotees are then described (9). Kṛṣṇa depicts the tenacity of those who are devoted and binds them (10-11). Verses 8 through 11, traditionally known as the "Threefold Devotion," are considered the essence of the Gītā's teaching. Those who know Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord and fully surrender unto Him in pure devotion are directly enlightened by Him and attain Him.

Arjuna emphatically declares his acceptance of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Absolute Truth and his total surrender to Him (12-13). Kṛṣṇa then describes (13-15) that he repays a devotee in full, as he has described in detail in the previous opulences, by which he pervades all these worlds and abides in them (16-18). Kṛṣṇa's passing description of His principal opulences concludes the conclusion of the chapter. (It lights up the radiant sun, of bodies of water the ocean, of living beings the Himalayas. He is the wisdom of the wise, the strength of the strong, the splendor of the splen-

CHAPTER ELEVEN



The Universal Form

TEXT 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।
मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: I have heard Your instruction on confidential spiritual matters which You have so kindly delivered unto me, and my illusion is now dispelled.

TEXT 2

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया ।
त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चान्वयम् ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

O lotus-eyed one, I have heard from You in detail about the appearance and disappearance of every living entity, as realized through Your inexhaustible glories.

TEXT 3

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

O greatest of all personalities, O supreme form, though I see here before me Your actual position, I yet wish to see how You have entered into this cosmic manifestation. I want to see that form of Yours.

TEXT 4

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

If You think that I am able to behold Your cosmic form, O my Lord, O master of all mystic power, then kindly show me that universal self.

TEXT 5

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: My dear Arjuna, O son of Pṛthā, behold now My opulences, hundreds of thousands of varied divine forms, multicolored like the sea.

TEXT 6

पश्यादित्यान्वसून्द्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा ।
बहून्वदष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

O best of the Bhāratas, see here the different manifestations of Ādityas, Rudras, and all the demigods. Behold the many things which no one has ever seen or heard before.

TEXT 7

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

Whatever you wish to see can be seen all at once in this body. This universal form can show you all that you now desire, as well as whatever you may desire in the future. Everything is here completely.

TEXT 8

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

But you cannot see Me with your present eyes. Therefore I give to you divine eyes by which you can behold My mystic opulence.

TEXT 9

सञ्जय उवाच ।
एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: O King, speaking thus, the Supreme, the Lord of all mystic power, the Personality of Godhead, displayed His universal form to Arjuna.

TEXTS 10-11

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् ।
 अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥ १० ॥
 दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
 सर्वार्थर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ ११ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna saw in that universal form unlimited mouths and unlimited eyes. It was all wondrous. The form was decorated with divine, dazzling ornaments and arrayed in many garbs. He was garlanded gloriously, and there were many scents smeared over His body. All was magnificent, all-expanding, unlimited. This was seen by Arjuna.

TEXT 12

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।
 यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ १२ ॥

TRANSLATION

If hundreds of thousands of suns rose up at once into the sky, they might resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Person in that universal form.

TEXT 13

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।
 अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ १३ ॥

TRANSLATION

At that time Arjuna could see in the universal form of the Lord the unlimited expansions of the universe situated in one place although divided into many, many thousands.

TEXT 14

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनञ्जयः ।
प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

Then, bewildered and astonished, his hair standing on end, Arjuna began to pray with folded hands, offering obeisances to the Supreme Lord.

TEXT 15

अर्जुन उवाच ।
पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे
सर्वास्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्गान् ।
ब्रह्माण्मीशं कमलासनस्थ-
मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, I see assembled together in Your body all the demigods and various other living entities. I see Brahmā sitting on the lotus flower as well as Lord Śiva and many sages and divine serpents.

TEXT 16

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं
पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तर्वादिं
पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

O Lord of the universe, I see in Your universal body many, many forms—bellies, mouths, eyes—expanded without limit. There is no end, there is no beginning, and there is no middle to all this.

TEXT 17

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च
 तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।
 पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ता-
 दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमग्रमेयम् ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

Your form, adorned with various crowns, clubs and discs, is difficult to see because of its glaring effulgence, which is fiery and immeasurable like the sun.

TEXT 18

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं
 त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
 त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता
 सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

You are the supreme primal objective; You are the best in all the universes; You are inexhaustible, and You are the oldest; You are the maintainer of religion, the eternal Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 19

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्य-
 मनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।
 पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं
 स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

You are the origin without beginning, middle or end. You have numberless arms, and the sun and moon are among Your great unlimited eyes. By Your own radiance You are heating this entire universe.

TEXT 20

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि
 व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।
 दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं
 लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

Although You are one, You are spread throughout the sky and the planets and all space between. O great one, as I behold this terrible form, I see that all the planetary systems are perplexed.

TEXT 21

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति
 केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति ।
 स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः
 स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

All the demigods are surrendering and entering into You. They are very much afraid, and with folded hands they are singing the Vedic hymns.

TEXT 22

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या
 विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च ।
 गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घा
 वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

The different manifestations of Lord Śiva, the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Sādhyas, the Viśvadevas, the two Aśvins, the Māruts, the forefathers and the Gandharvas, the Yakṣas, Asuras, and all perfected demigods are beholding You in wonder.

TEXT 23

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं
 महाबाहो बहुबाहूरूपादम् ।
 बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं
 दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

O mighty-armed one, all the planets with their demigods are disturbed at seeing Your many faces, eyes, arms, bellies and legs and Your terrible teeth, and as they are disturbed, so am I.

TEXT 24

नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं
 व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।
 दृष्ट्वा हि तां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा
 धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

O all-pervading Viṣṇu, I can no longer maintain my equilibrium. Seeing Your radiant colors fill the skies and beholding Your eyes and mouths, I am afraid.

TEXT 25

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि
 दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि ॥२५॥
 दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म
 प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

O Lord of lords, O refuge of the worlds, please be gracious to me. I cannot keep my balance seeing thus Your blazing deathlike faces and awful teeth. In all directions I am bewildered.

TEXTS 26-27

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः
 सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः ।
 भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ
 सहासदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥२६॥
 वक्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति
 दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।
 केचिद्विलम्बा दशनान्तरेषु
 संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

All the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra along with their allied kings, and Bhīṣma, Droṇa and Karṇa, and all our soldiers are rushing into Your mouths, their heads smashed by Your fearful teeth. I see that some are being crushed between Your teeth as well.

TEXT 28

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः
 समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
 तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा
 विशन्ति वक्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

As the rivers flow into the sea, so all these great warriors enter Your blazing mouths and perish.

TEXT 29

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा
 विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।

तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका-
स्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

I see all people rushing with full speed into Your mouths as moths dash into a blazing fire.

TEXT 30

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता-
लोकान्समग्रान्वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः ।
तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं
भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

O Viṣṇu, I see You devouring all people in Your flaming mouths and covering the universe with Your immeasurable rays. Scorching the worlds, You are manifest.

TEXT 31

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो
नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं
न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥३१॥

TRANSLATION

O Lord of lords, so fierce of form, please tell me who You are. I offer my obeisances unto You; please be gracious to me. I do not know what Your mission is, and I desire to hear of it.

TEXT 32

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

कालोऽसि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो
लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥३२॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: Time I am, destroyer of the worlds, and I have come to engage all people. With the exception of you [the Pāṇḍavas], all the soldiers here on both sides will be slain.

TEXT 33

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
जित्वा शत्रून्मुञ्च राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥३३॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore get up and prepare to fight. After conquering your enemies you will enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They are already put to death by My arrangement, and you, O Savyasācin, can be but an instrument in the fight.

TEXT 34

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च
कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान् ।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मान्यथिष्ठा
युद्ध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान् ॥३४॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: All the great warriors—Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Karna—are already destroyed. Simply fight, and you will vanquish your enemies.

TEXT 35

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य

कृताञ्जलिवर्षमानः किरीटी ।

नमस्कृत्वा भूय एषाह कृष्णं

सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥ ३५ ॥

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said to Dhṛtarāṣṭra: O King, after hearing these words from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Arjuna trembled, fearfully offered obeisances with folded hands and began, falteringly, to speak as follows:

TEXT 36

अर्जुन उवाच ।

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या

जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।

रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति

सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्गाः ॥ ३६ ॥

TRANSLATION

O Hṛṣīkeśa, the world becomes joyful upon hearing Your name and thus everyone becomes attached to You. Although the perfected beings offer You their respectful homage, the demons are afraid, and they flee here and there. All this is rightly done.

TEXT 37

कसाच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन्
 गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।
 अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास
 त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥३७॥

TRANSLATION

O great one, who stands above even Brahmā, You are the original master. Why should they not offer their homage up to You, O limitless one? O refuge of the universe, You are the invincible source, the cause of all causes transcendental to this material manifestation.

TEXT 38

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण-
 स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
 वेत्ताऽसि वेद्यं च परं च धाम
 त्वया तत् विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥३८॥

TRANSLATION

You are the original Personality, the Godhead. You are the only sanctuary of this manifested cosmic world. You know everything, and You are all that is knowable. You are above the material modes. O limitless form! This whole cosmic manifestation is pervaded by You!

TEXT 39

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः
 प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
 नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः
 पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥३९॥

TRANSLATION

You are air, fire, water, and You are the moon! You are the supreme controller and the grandfather. Thus I offer my respectful obeisances unto You a thousand times, and again and yet again!

TEXT 40

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।
अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं
सर्वं समामोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥४०॥

TRANSLATION

Obeisances from the front, from behind and from all sides! O unbounded power, You are the master of limitless might! You are all-pervading, and thus You are everything!

TEXTS 41-42

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं
मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वाऽपि ॥४१॥
यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि
विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं
तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥४२॥

TRANSLATION

I have in the past addressed You as "O Kṛṣṇa," "O Yādava," "O my friend," without knowing Your glories. Please forgive whatever I may have done in madness or in love. I have dishonored You many times while

relaxing or while lying on the same bed or eating together, sometimes alone and sometimes in front of many friends. Please excuse me for all my offenses.

TEXT 43

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
 त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान् ।
 न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
 लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥४३॥

TRANSLATION

You are the father of this complete cosmic manifestation, the worshipable chief, the spiritual master. No one is equal to You, nor can anyone be one with You. Within the three worlds, You are immeasurable.

TEXT 44

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं
 प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम् ।
 पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः
 प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥४४॥

TRANSLATION

You are the Supreme Lord, to be worshiped by every living being. Thus I fall down to offer You my respects and ask Your mercy. Please tolerate the wrongs that I may have done to You and bear with me as a father with his son, or a friend with his friend, or a lover with his beloved.

TEXT 45

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा
 भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।

तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥४५॥

TRANSLATION

After seeing this universal form, which I have never seen before, I am gladdened, but at the same time my mind is disturbed with fear. Therefore please bestow Your grace upon me and reveal again Your form as the Personality of Godhead, O Lord of lords, O abode of the universe.

TEXT 46

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त-
मिच्छामि तां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव ।
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन
सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥४६॥

TRANSLATION

O universal Lord, I wish to see You in Your four-armed form, with helmeted head and with club, wheel, conch and lotus flower in Your hands. I long to see You in that form.

TEXT 47

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं
रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं
यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥४७॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: My dear Arjuna, happily do I show you this universal form within the material world by My internal potency. No one before you has ever seen this unlimited and glaringly effulgent form.

TEXT 48

न वेद यज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानै-
 न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।
 एवरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके
 द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥४८॥

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kuru warriors, no one before you has ever seen this universal form of Mine, for neither by studying the Vedas, nor by performing sacrifices, nor by charities or similar activities can this form be seen. Only you have seen this.

TEXT 49

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो
 दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृजमेदम् ।
 व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं
 तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥४९॥

TRANSLATION

Your mind has been perturbed upon seeing this horrible feature of Mine. Now let it be finished. My devotee, be free from all disturbance. With a peaceful mind you can now see the form you desire.

TEXT 50

सञ्जय उवाच

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा
स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।

आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं
भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवर्णमहात्मा ॥५०॥

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said to Dhṛtarāṣṭra: The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, while speaking thus to Arjuna, displayed His real four-armed form, and at last He showed him His two-armed form, thus encouraging the fearful Arjuna.

TEXT 51

अर्जुन उवाच ।

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।

इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥५१॥

TRANSLATION

When Arjuna thus saw Kṛṣṇa in His original form, he said: Seeing this humanlike form, so very beautiful, my mind is now pacified, and I am restored to my original nature.

TEXT 52

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्ट्वानसि यन्मम ।

देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ॥५२॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: My dear Arjuna, the form which you are now seeing is very difficult to behold. Even the demigods are ever seeking the opportunity to see this form which is so dear.

TEXT 53

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥५३॥

TRANSLATION

The form which you are seeing with your transcendental eyes cannot be understood simply by studying the Vedas, nor by undergoing serious penances, nor by charity, nor by worship. It is not by these means that one can see Me as I am.

TEXT 54

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥५४॥

TRANSLATION

My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding.

TEXT 55

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥५५॥

TRANSLATION

My dear Arjuna, one who is engaged in My pure devotional service, free from the contaminations of previous activities and from mental speculation, who is friendly to every living entity, certainly comes to Me.

SUMMARY

In this chapter of the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa directly reveals to Arjuna His *virāt-rūpa*, or "universal form." By this revelation, Kṛṣṇa confirms Arjuna's realization that Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes and, specifically, the source of the material universes.

The chapter begins with Arjuna's declaration that after hearing Kṛṣṇa's confidential instructions (in the previous several chapters), he has now been freed from illusion. This indicates that he has now fully accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute Truth and the source of everything, and not as a mere human being (1). However, although Arjuna accepts Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme, he fears that others, in the future, may not. He therefore requests Kṛṣṇa: "O greatest of all beings, O supreme form, though I see here before me Your actual position, I yet wish to see how You have entered into this cosmic manifestation. I wish to see that form of Yours." (3) To establish Kṛṣṇa's divinity conclusively, Arjuna thus requests Kṛṣṇa to reveal His gigantic form of the material universe (2-4). Kṛṣṇa assents to showing Arjuna His majestic and terrifying universal form and grants him divine vision with which to see it (5-8).

Kṛṣṇa then reveals the spectacular form (9-49) in which Arjuna, stunned and astonished, can see "the unlimited expansions of the universe situated in one place, although divided into many, many thousands" (13). Arjuna, his hairs standing on end, describes the vast and effulgent form and offers prayers of glorification (14-25). He sees also in the universal form the entire opposing army, along with his own soldiers, rushing into Kṛṣṇa's many mouths, meeting their doom (26-30). Arjuna then urgently implores Kṛṣṇa to explain the great form (31). In reply, Kṛṣṇa informs Arjuna that according to His plan, nearly all the soldiers present will be slain in the battle. Although this plan will ultimately be executed with or without Arjuna's participation, Arjuna should act as Kṛṣṇa's instrument in the great fight and thus be assured of victory (32-34). Arjuna, overwhelmed, glorifies Kṛṣṇa as the original master, the refuge of the universe, and the cause of all causes (35-40), and he begs Kṛṣṇa to forgive him for his familiar dealings in the past (41-44).

Disturbed by the vision of Kṛṣṇa's universal form, Arjuna then entreats Kṛṣṇa to return to His four-armed (Nārāyaṇa) form (45-46). After informing Arjuna that Arjuna was the first person ever to have seen this universal form (47-48), Kṛṣṇa resumes His four-armed form and then finally His original two-armed form, thus pacifying Arjuna (49-51). Kṛṣṇa then explains that His beautiful two-armed form is inconceivable even to the demigods and is beyond understanding by Vedic study, penance, charity and worship (52-53). Kṛṣṇa concludes the chapter by declaring that His transcendental, personal humanlike form can be directly understood only by pure devotional service (*bhakti*) and that pure *bhaktas* (devotees), who are "friendly to every living entity," attain His eternal association (54-55).

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can be directly understood only by pure devotional service (bhakti) and
that pure bhaktas (devotees), who are "intensely to every living entity,"
attain His eternal association (54-55).

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa reveals His universal form to Arjuna, who is
in a state of confusion and distress. Kṛṣṇa explains that His form is
beyond the material world and is not subject to the laws of nature. He
states that He is the source of all creation and the maintainer of all
things. He is the father of all living beings and the husband of all
goddesses. He is the king of all worlds and the lord of all demigods.
He is the supreme deity and the ultimate reality. He is the one who
is worshipped by all people and the one who is feared by all demons.
He is the one who is loved by all devotees and the one who is hated
by all enemies. He is the one who is the source of all happiness and
the one who is the cause of all suffering. He is the one who is the
goal of all spiritual practices and the one who is the ultimate
destination of all souls. He is the one who is the source of all
knowledge and the one who is the ultimate truth. He is the one who
is the source of all life and the one who is the ultimate reality.

Kṛṣṇa then explains that His form is not just a physical form, but
it is a spiritual form. It is a form that is beyond the material world
and is not subject to the laws of nature. He states that He is the
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father of all living beings and the husband of all goddesses. He is
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CHAPTER TWELVE



Devotional Service

TEXT 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।
एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna inquired: Which is considered to be more perfect: those who are properly engaged in Your devotional service, or those who worship the impersonal Brahman, the unmanifested?

TEXT 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: He whose mind is fixed on My personal form, always engaged in worshipping Me with great and transcendental faith, is considered by Me to be most perfect.

TEXTS 3-4

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
 सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३ ॥
 संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रासं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
 ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

But those who fully worship the unmanifested, that which lies beyond the perception of the senses, the all-pervading, inconceivable, fixed, and immovable—the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth—by controlling the various senses and being equally disposed to everyone, such persons, engaged in the welfare of all, at last achieve Me.

TEXT 5

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
 अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied.

TEXTS 6-7

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।
 अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ ६ ॥
 तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
 भवामि न चिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

For one who worships Me, giving up all his activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating upon Me, who has fixed his mind upon Me, O son of Pṛthā, for him I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death.

TEXT 8

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

Just fix your mind upon Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and engage all your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt.

TEXT 9

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छातुं धनंजय ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

My dear Arjuna, O winner of wealth, if you cannot fix your mind upon Me without deviation, then follow the regulated principles of bhakti-yoga. In this way you will develop a desire to attain to Me.

TEXT 10

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

If you cannot practice the regulations of bhakti-yoga, then just try to work for Me, because by working for Me you will come to the perfect stage.

TEXT 11

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥११॥

TRANSLATION

If, however, you are unable to work in this consciousness, then try to act giving up all results of your work and try to be self-situated.

TEXT 12

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

If you cannot take to this practice, then engage yourself in the cultivation of knowledge. Better than knowledge, however, is meditation, and better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of action, for by such renunciation one can attain peace of mind.

TEXTS 13-14

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥१३॥
संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

One who is not envious but who is a kind friend to all living entities, who *does not think himself a proprietor*, who is free from false ego and equal *to happiness and distress*, who is always satisfied and engaged in devotional service with determination and whose mind and intelligence are in agreement with Me—he is very dear to Me.

TEXT 15

यस्माभोद्विजते लोको लोकाभोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५ ॥

TRANSLATION

He for whom no one is put into difficulty and who is not disturbed by anxiety, who is steady in happiness and distress, is very dear to Me.

TEXT 16

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १६ ॥

TRANSLATION

A devotee who is not dependent on the ordinary course of activities, who is pure, expert, without cares, free from all pains, and who does not strive for some result, is very dear to Me.

TEXT 17

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

TRANSLATION

One who neither grasps pleasure or grief, who neither laments nor desires, and who renounces both auspicious and inauspicious things, is very dear to Me.

TEXTS 18-19

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केन चित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

One who is equal to friends and enemies, who is equipoised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, happiness and distress, fame and infamy, who is always free from contamination, always silent and satisfied with anything, who doesn't care for any residence, who is fixed in knowledge and engaged in devotional service, is very dear to Me.

TEXT 20

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽस्तीव मे प्रियाः ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

He who follows this imperishable path of devotional service and who completely engages himself with faith, making Me the supreme goal, is very, very dear to Me.

SUMMARY

In the preceding chapters, Kṛṣṇa explained the personal, impersonal and universal conceptions of the Supreme, as well as the different *yoga* systems for approaching the Supreme. In the Twelfth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa asserts that *bhakti-yoga*, loving devotional service, is the highest and most expedient process of spiritual realization. He also delineates the sublime characteristics of those who follow this supreme path.

This chapter, like others, begins with a question by Arjuna. Although Kṛṣṇa has previously established worship of His personal form as the supreme mode of worship, and devotion to Him as the highest *yoga*, Arjuna now wants to make sure he has fully understood. In the first verse, therefore, he asks Kṛṣṇa to state whom He considers more perfect—those engaged in His devotional service or the worshipers of the

unmanifest Brahman, the impersonal, all-pervasive feature of Kṛṣṇa (1). Kṛṣṇa replies: "He whose mind is fixed on My personal form, always engaged in worshiping Me with great and transcendental faith, is considered by Me to be most perfect." (2) Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that the worshipers of the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth eventually achieve Him, but because this is an indirect process, it is much more difficult (3-5). He assures Arjuna that for those fixed in pure devotion to Him, He is "the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death." (6-7) He instructs Arjuna to fix his mind and intelligence on Him and, by this simple method, attain Him (8). For those unable to fix their attention, spontaneously and undeviatingly, upon Him, Kṛṣṇa explains the indirect process by which they can attain that state by gradual steps, beginning with the cultivation of knowledge (*jñāna*), proceeding to meditation (*dhyāna*), to renunciation of the fruits of action (*karma-phala-tyāga*), to sacrifice of the fruits of work (*karma-yoga*), and finally to the execution of the regulative, remedial principles of *bhakti-yoga* (*sādhana-bhakti*) (9-12).

In the final section of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa relates the qualities and characteristics of His pure devotee, repeating at the end of each description that such a devotee "is very dear to Me." The devotee is free from material desires, material dualities and false ego. Having made Kṛṣṇa the supreme goal of life, the devotee engages in His service with determination, his mind and intelligence in complete harmony with Kṛṣṇa (13-20).

unmistakable Brahman, the impersonal, all-pervasive feature of Kṛṣṇa (1). Kṛṣṇa replies: "The worshiper is fixed on the personal form, always engaged in worshipping Me with great and transcendental faith, is considered by Me to be most perfect." (2) Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that the worshipers of the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth eventually achieve Him, but because this is an indirect process, it is much more difficult (3-5). He assures Arjuna that for those fixed in pure devotion to Him, He is "the self" delivered from the ocean of birth and death." (6-7) He instructs Arjuna to fix his mind and intelligence on Him and, by this simple method, attain Him (8). "For those unable to fix their attention spontaneously and understandingly upon Him, Kṛṣṇa explains the indirect process by which they can attain that state by gradual steps, beginning with the cultivation of knowledge (jñāna), proceeding to meditation (dhyāna), to renunciation of the fruits of action (karma-phala-tyāga), to sacrifice of the fruits of work (karma-tyāga), and finally to the execution of the regulative, remedial principles of bhakti-yoga (bhakti-dharmā) (9-12).

In the final section of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa relates the qualities and characteristics of His pure devotee, repeating at the end of each description that such a devotee "is very dear to Me." The devotee is free from material desires, material qualities and false ego, having made Kṛṣṇa the supreme goal of life, the devotee engages in His service with determination, his mind and intelligence in complete harmony with Kṛṣṇa (13-20).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN



Nature, the Enjoyer, and Consciousness

TEXTS 1-2

अर्जुन उवाच ।
प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।
एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ॥ १ ॥
श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O my dear Kṛṣṇa, I wish to know about prakṛti [nature], Puruṣa [the enjoyer], and the field and the knower of the field, and of knowledge and the end of knowledge. The Blessed Lord then said: This body, O son of Kuntī, is called the field, and one who knows this body is called the knower of the field.

TEXT 3

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

O scion of Bharata, you should understand that I am also the knower in all bodies, and to understand this body and its owner is called knowledge. That is My opinion.

TEXT 4

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक् यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।
स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

Now please hear My brief description of this field of activity and how it is constituted, what its changes are, whence it is produced, who that knower of the field of activities is, and what his influences are.

TEXT 5

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

That knowledge of the field of activities and of the knower of activities is described by various sages in various Vedic writings—especially in the Vedānta-sūtra—and is presented with all reasoning as to cause and effect.

TEXTS 6-7

महामूतान्यहङ्कारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ ६ ॥

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं सङ्घातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

The five great elements, false ego, intelligence, the unmanifested, the ten senses, the mind, the five sense objects, desire, hatred, happiness, distress, the aggregate, the life symptoms, and convictions—all these are considered, in summary, to be the field of activities and its interactions.

TEXTS 8-12

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ८ ॥
इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च ।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ९ ॥
असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ १० ॥
मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ ११ ॥
अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ १२ ॥

TRANSLATION

Humility, pridelessness, nonviolence, tolerance, simplicity, approaching a bona fide spiritual master, cleanliness, steadiness and self-control; renunciation of the objects of sense gratification, absence of false ego, the perception of the evil of birth, death, old age and disease; nonattachment to children, wife, home and the rest, and evenmindedness amid pleasant and unpleasant events; constant and unalloyed devotion to Me, resorting to solitary places, detachment from the general mass of people; accepting the importance of self-realization, and philosophical search for the Absolute Truth—all these I thus declare to be knowledge, and what is contrary to these is ignorance.

TEXT 13

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते ।
अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

I shall now explain the knowable, knowing which you will taste the eternal. This is beginningless, and it is subordinate to Me. It is called Brahman, the spirit, and it lies beyond the cause and effect of this material world.

TEXT 14

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

Everywhere are His hands and legs, His eyes and faces, and He hears everything. In this way the Supersoul exists.

TEXT 15

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।
असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all modes of material nature.

TEXT 16

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Truth exists both internally and externally, in the moving and nonmoving. He is beyond the power of the material senses to see or to know. Although far, far away, He is also near to all.

TEXT 17

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

Although the Supersoul appears to be divided, He is never divided. He is situated as one. Although He is the maintainer of every living entity, it is to be understood that He devours and develops all.

TEXT 18

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

He is the source of light in all luminous objects. He is beyond the darkness of matter and is unmanifested. He is knowledge, He is the object of knowledge, and He is the goal of knowledge. He is situated in everyone's heart.

TEXT 19

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।
मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

Thus the field of activities [the body], knowledge, and the knowable have been summarily described by Me. Only My devotees can understand this thoroughly and thus attain to My nature.

TEXT 20

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि ।
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसंभवान् ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

Material nature and the living entities should be understood to be beginningless. Their transformations and the modes of matter are products of material nature.

TEXT 21

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।
पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

Nature is said to be the cause of all material activities and effects, whereas the living entity is the cause of the various sufferings and enjoyments in this world.

TEXT 22

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्यो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान् ।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

The living entity in material nature thus follows the ways of life, enjoying the three modes of nature. This is due to his association with that material nature. Thus he meets with good and evil amongst various species.

TEXT 23

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

Yet in this body there is another, a transcendental enjoyer who is the Lord, the supreme proprietor, who exists as the overseer and permitter, and who is known as the Supersoul.

TEXT 24

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

One who understands this philosophy concerning material nature, the living entity and the interaction of the modes of nature is sure to attain liberation. He will not take birth here again, regardless of his present position.

TEXT 25

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।
अन्ये साङ्ख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

That Supersoul is perceived by some through meditation, by some through the cultivation of knowledge, and by others through working without fruitive desire.

TEXT 26

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

Again there are those who, although not conversant in spiritual knowledge, begin to worship the Supreme Person upon hearing about Him from others. Because of their tendency to hear from authorities, they also transcend the path of birth and death.

TEXT 27

यावत्संजायते किञ्चित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

O chief of the Bhāratas, whatever you see in existence, both moving and unmoving, is only the combination of the field of activities and the knower of the field.

TEXT 28

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

One who sees the Supersoul accompanying the individual soul in all bodies and who understands that neither the soul nor the Supersoul is ever destroyed, actually sees.

TEXT 29

समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

One who sees the Supersoul in every living being and equal everywhere does not degrade himself by his mind. Thus he approaches the transcendental destination.

TEXT 30

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।
यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

One who can see that all activities are performed by the body, which is created of material nature, and sees that the self does nothing, actually sees.

TEXT 31

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥३१॥

TRANSLATION

When a sensible man ceases to see different identities, which are due to different material bodies, he attains to the Brahman conception. Thus he sees that beings are expanded everywhere.

TEXT 32

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥३२॥

TRANSLATION

Those with the vision of eternity can see that the soul is transcendental, eternal, and beyond the modes of nature. Despite contact with the material body, O Arjuna, the soul neither does anything nor is entangled.

TEXT 33

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥३३॥

TRANSLATION

The sky, due to its subtle nature, does not mix with anything, although it is all-pervading. Similarly, the soul, situated in Brahman vision, does not mix with the body, though situated in that body.

TEXT 34

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥३४॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Bharata, as the sun alone illuminates all this universe, so does the living entity, one within the body, illuminate the entire body by consciousness.

TEXT 35

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥३५॥

TRANSLATION

One who knowingly sees this difference between the body and the owner of the body and can understand the process of liberation from this bondage, also attains to the supreme goal.

SUMMARY

The Thirteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* is concerned with the distinction and interrelationship between the body, the soul and the Supersoul (Paramātmā). The body is known as *kṣetra*, or the field of activities for the soul, and it consists of twenty-four material elements. The soul residing within the body is known as *kṣetra-jñā*, or "the knower of the field of activities." The symptoms of life and ultimately all movement within the material world are due to the interaction of the soul with matter. Beyond the *kṣetra-jñā*, the individual knower of the body (the soul), is the supreme *kṣetra-jñā*, the Supersoul, who is the supreme knower within all bodies. Although the Supersoul exists as one, He appears separately in all bodies (as the sun simultaneously appears, in reflection, in many different reservoirs of water). He eternally accompanies the individual soul as the indwelling witness, permitter and maintainer. Of these two "knowers of the field" of activities, the *jīva* (individual infinitesimal soul) is fallible, being subject to the contaminating and illusioning influence of matter, whereas the Supersoul is infallible, being immune to matter's influence. This chapter concludes that one who can analytically understand the entire material manifestation as a combination of the soul with material elements, and who can see, beyond them, the Supreme Soul (Supersoul), becomes eligible for liberation from the material world to the spiritual world.

As the chapter begins, Arjuna inquires about six items: *prakṛti* (material nature), *puruṣa* (the enjoyer), *kṣetra* (the field), *kṣetra-jñā* (the knower of the field), *jñāna* (knowledge), and *jñeya* (the end of knowledge) (1). Kṛṣṇa defines *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jñā*, respectively, as the body and the soul (2). He then states that He is the knower in all bodies, and He defines knowledge as the understanding of these three (the body, the individual soul and the Supersoul) (3). Next, He lists the twenty-four material elements that constitute the field of activity, represented by the body (4-7). He then enumerates the items that constitute the process of knowledge, this process being nondifferent from the process of spiritual advancement whereby the embodied soul is liberated from the bondage of matter (8-12). Kṛṣṇa next describes *jñeya* ("the knowable") to be the Supersoul, existing in all moving and nonmoving things. The Supersoul is one although divided, He is the unattached maintainer of all living

beings, He is transcendental to the modes of nature (although He is the master of the modes), and He is beyond the purview of the material senses (13-19). Next, Kṛṣṇa describes *prakṛti* (material nature, consisting of the three modes) and *puruṣa* (the living entity), and He discusses the cause and nature of the *jīva*'s material entanglement (20-24). In the next two verses, He mentions different paths for realization of the Supersoul—*dhyāna*, *sāṅkhya*, *karma-yoga*, and the path of receiving knowledge from authorities (25-26).

In the final verses of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa elaborates on the essential theme of the chapter: the interrelationship between matter, soul and Supersoul. All actions, He says, are due to the combination of *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jñā* (body and soul), beyond which is the Supersoul. The soul and Supersoul are both eternal and transcendental to the body (27-34). In conclusion, Kṛṣṇa declares that one in knowledge, who sees the distinction between the body and the soul and who understands the process of the soul's liberation from the body, "attains to the supreme goal." (35)



The Three Modes of Material Nature

TEXT 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: Again I shall declare to you this supreme wisdom, the best of all knowledge, knowing which all the sages have attained to supreme perfection.

TEXT 2

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain to the transcendental nature, which is like My own nature. Thus established, one is not born at the time of creation nor disturbed at the time of dissolution.

TEXT 3

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

The total material substance, called Brahman, is the source of birth, and it is that Brahman that I impregnate, making possible the births of all living beings, O son of Bharata.

TEXT 4

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kuntī, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.

TEXT 5

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

Material nature consists of the three modes—goodness, passion and ignorance. When the living entity comes in contact with nature, he becomes conditioned by these modes.

TEXT 6

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

O sinless one, the mode of goodness, being purer than the others, is illuminating, and it frees one from all sinful reactions. Those situated in that mode develop knowledge, but they become conditioned by the concept of happiness.

TEXT 7

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

The mode of passion is born of unlimited desires and longings, O son of Kuntī, and because of this one is bound to material fruitive activities.

TEXT 8

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Bharata, the mode of ignorance causes the delusion of all living entities. The result of this mode is madness, indolence and sleep, which bind the conditioned soul.

TEXT 9

सत्त्वं सुखे संजयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे संजयत्युत ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

The mode of goodness conditions one to happiness, passion conditions him to the fruits of action, and ignorance to madness.

TEXT 10

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।
रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

Sometimes the mode of passion becomes prominent, defeating the mode of goodness, O son of Bharata. And sometimes the mode of goodness defeats passion, and at other times the mode of ignorance defeats goodness and passion. In this way there is always competition for supremacy.

TEXT 11

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते ।
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ ११ ॥

TRANSLATION

The manifestations of the mode of goodness can be experienced when all the gates of the body are illuminated by knowledge.

TEXT 12

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।
रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥ १२ ॥

TRANSLATION

O chief of the Bhāratas, when there is an increase in the mode of passion, the symptoms of great attachment, uncontrollable desire, hankering, and intense endeavor develop.

TEXT 13

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuru, when there is an increase in the mode of ignorance, madness, illusion, inertia and darkness are manifested.

TEXT 14

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

When one dies in the mode of goodness, he attains to the pure higher planets.

TEXT 15

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ।
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

When one dies in the mode of passion, he takes birth among those engaged in fruitive activities; and when he dies in the mode of ignorance, he takes birth in the animal kingdom.

TEXT 16

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

By acting in the mode of goodness, one becomes purified. Works done in the mode of passion result in distress, and actions performed in the mode of ignorance result in foolishness.

TEXT 17

सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

From the mode of goodness, real knowledge develops; from the mode of passion, grief develops; and from the mode of ignorance, foolishness, madness and illusion develop.

TEXT 18

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

Those situated in the mode of goodness gradually go upward to the higher planets; those in the mode of passion live on the earthly planets, and those in the mode of ignorance go down to the hellish worlds.

TEXT 19

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

When you see that there is nothing beyond these modes of nature in all activities and that the Supreme Lord is transcendental to all these modes, then you can know My spiritual nature.

TEXT 20

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

When the embodied being is able to transcend these three modes, he can become free from birth, death, old age and their distresses and can enjoy nectar even in this life.

TEXT 21

अर्जुन उवाच ।
कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna inquired: O my dear Lord, by what symptoms is one known who is transcendental to those modes? What is his behavior? And how does he transcend the modes of nature?

TEXTS 22-25

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥२२॥
उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥२३॥

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥२४॥

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: He who does not hate illumination, attachment and delusion when they are present, nor longs for them when they disappear; who is seated like one unconcerned, being situated beyond these material reactions of the modes of nature, who remains firm, knowing that the modes alone are active; who regards alike pleasure and pain, and looks on a clod, a stone and a piece of gold with an equal eye; who is wise and holds praise and blame to be the same; who is unchanged in honor and dishonor, who treats friend and foe alike, who has abandoned all fruitive undertakings—such a man is said to have transcended the modes of nature.

TEXT 26

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।

स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.

TEXT 27

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।

शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥ २७॥

TRANSLATION

And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness, and which is immortal, imperishable and eternal.

SUMMARY

As explained in the Thirteenth Chapter, the *jīva* is entangled in the material world because of association with the three modes of material nature. In this Fourteenth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa explains what the modes of nature are, how they act, how they bind and how one is liberated from their influence.

In the beginning of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa declares to Arjuna that He will now, again, reveal "this supreme wisdom, the best of all knowledge," by understanding which one can attain to "the transcendental nature" and be freed from the repetition of birth and death (1-2). Kṛṣṇa first explains that all living beings take birth within this material world when He injects them into the material nature. He is therefore the "seed-giving father" of all the different species of life in the material world (3-4). Material nature consists of three modes: *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (ignorance). These modes condition the living entity who takes birth in the material world (5). Kṛṣṇa defines and explains the general characteristics and symptoms of the modes and how they condition and bind the *jīva*, and He describes the fate of differently conditioned *jīvas* after death (6-18). One can transcend the influence of the three modes and attain Kṛṣṇa by understanding the working of the modes and understanding that Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to them (19). When one transcends the modes, he attains freedom from the distresses of birth, old age and death and can "enjoy nectar even in this life" (20). Arjuna next asks Kṛṣṇa three questions: "What are the symptoms of one who is tran-

scendental to the modes of nature?" "What is his behavior?" and "How does he transcend the modes?" (21) Kṛṣṇa answers the first two questions in verses 22 through 25. In essence, a person who has transcended the modes of nature, having realized his own self to be spiritual and transcendental to matter, is unconcerned with and unaffected by the actions and reactions of the material world. He is freed from all material dualities, such as pleasure and pain, honor and dishonor, and he does not engage in any fruitive actions. In answer to Arjuna's third question, Kṛṣṇa says that one transcends the modes by performing *bhakti-yoga* (devotional service). And when one transcends the modes, he attains to the level of Brahman, the preliminary spiritual position, characterized by freedom from material contamination (26). In the final verse of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa declares that He is the basis or source of Brahman (27). Therefore, when one has attained the level of Brahman (i.e. freedom from the contamination of the modes of nature), he becomes qualified to engage in the devotional service of Parabrahman (the Supreme Brahman), Kṛṣṇa.



The Yoga of the Supreme Person

TEXT 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।

छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: There is a banyan tree which has its roots upward and its branches down and whose leaves are the Vedic hymns. One who knows this tree is the knower of the Vedas.

TEXT 2

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा

गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।

अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि

कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

The branches of this tree extend downward and upward, nourished by the three modes of material nature. The twigs are the objects of the senses. This tree also has roots going down, and these are bound to the fruitive actions of human society.

TEXTS 3-4

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
 नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।
 अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूल-
 मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥ ३ ॥
 ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं
 यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
 तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
 यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

The real form of this tree cannot be perceived in this world. No one can understand where it ends, where it begins, or where its foundation is. But with determination one must cut down this tree with the weapon of detachment. So doing, one must seek that place from which, having once gone, one never returns, and there surrender to that Supreme Personality of Godhead from whom everything has begun and in whom everything is abiding since time immemorial.

TEXT 5

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
 अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।
 द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-
 र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

One who is free from illusion, false prestige, and false association, who understands the eternal, who is done with material lust and is freed from the duality of happiness and distress, and who knows how to surrender unto the Supreme Person, attains to that eternal kingdom.

TEXT 6

न तद्भासयत सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

That abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by electricity. One who reaches it never returns to this material world.

TEXT 7

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal, fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.

TEXT 8

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

The living entity in the material world carries his different conceptions of life from one body to another as the air carries aromas.

TEXT 9

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

The living entity, thus taking another gross body, obtains a certain type of ear, tongue, and nose and sense of touch, which are grouped about the mind. He thus enjoys a particular set of sense objects.

TEXT 10

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वाऽपि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

The foolish cannot understand how a living entity can quit his body, nor can they understand what sort of body he enjoys under the spell of the modes of nature. But one whose eyes are trained in knowledge can see all this.

TEXT 11

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥ ११ ॥

TRANSLATION

The endeavoring transcendentalist, who is situated in self-realization, can see all this clearly. But those who are not situated in self-realization cannot see what is taking place, though they may try to.

TEXT 12

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।
यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥ १२ ॥

TRANSLATION

The splendor of the sun, which dissipates the darkness of this whole world, comes from Me. And the splendor of the moon and the splendor of fire are also from Me.

TEXT 13

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।
पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

I enter into each planet, and by My energy they stay in orbit. I become the moon and thereby supply the juice of life to all vegetables.

TEXT 14

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

I am the fire of digestion in every living body, and I am the air of life, outgoing and incoming, by which I digest the four kinds of foodstuff.

TEXT 15

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो
मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas am I to be known; indeed I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.

TEXT 16

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

There are two classes of beings, the fallible and the infallible. In the material world every entity is fallible, and in the spiritual world every entity is called infallible.

TEXT 17

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य विभर्त्यन्यय ईश्वरः ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

Besides these two, there is the greatest living personality, the Lord Himself, who has entered into these worlds and is maintaining them.

TEXT 18

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

Because I am transcendental, beyond both the fallible and the infallible, and because I am the greatest, I am celebrated both in the world and in the Vedas as that Supreme Person.

TEXT 19

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

Whoever knows Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without doubting, is to be understood as the knower of everything, and he therefore engages himself in full devotional service, O son of Bharata.

TEXT 20

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयाऽनघ ।
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

This is the most confidential part of the Vedic scriptures, O sinless one, and it is disclosed now by Me. Whoever understands this will become wise, and his endeavors will know perfection.

SUMMARY

In the last several chapters, Kṛṣṇa has recommended *bhakti-yoga* as the most expedient method by which Arjuna may extricate himself from the entanglement of the material world. The basic principle of *bhakti-yoga* is detachment from material activities and attachment to the transcendental devotional service of Kṛṣṇa. Now, the Fifteenth Chapter begins by describing how to break attachment to the material world (and attain the spiritual world), and it ends with Kṛṣṇa's emphatically declaring that the truth of His being the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Puruṣottama) is the essence of the Vedic scriptures. One who understands this engages in *bhakti-yoga* (devotional service to Him).

At the very beginning of the chapter, the material world, with its fruitive activity (*karma*) and entangling results, is compared to a complexly entwined banyan tree. The various parts of the tree (roots, branches, twigs, leaves, fruits, etc.) are compared to fruitive activity, piety and impiety, the senses, the sense objects, the results of fruitive activities, the Vedic hymns for elevation, the different planetary systems, and so forth. By performing fruitive activities (based on the desire for sense gratification), the entangled *jīva* is forced to wander from branch to branch (i.e. from body to body, planet to planet) in this tree of the material world. Kṛṣṇa then declares that "one who knows this tree is the knower of the *Vedas*." In other words, the ultimate purpose of Vedic knowledge is to

understand this entangling "tree" of the material world and to extricate oneself from it (1-2).

Next, Kṛṣṇa describes the means of extricating oneself and attaining the spiritual world: "Using the weapon of detachment, one must cut down this banyan tree with determination. Thereafter one must seek that situation from which, having gone, one never comes back. One must surrender to that Supreme Personality of Godhead from whom everything has begun and is extending since time immemorial." Kṛṣṇa then describes the surrendering process and gives a brief description of the spiritual world (3-6).

In the next verses, Kṛṣṇa describes the conditioned living entities in the material world and how they are transmigrating from one body to the next. Such living entities are Kṛṣṇa's eternal "fragmental parts." According to his mentality, the bound *jīva* develops a particular gross material body equipped with a particular set of senses, with which he enjoys a particular set of objects. Kṛṣṇa asserts that the foolish cannot understand this process of transmigration, but the wise can (7-11).

Throughout the rest of the chapter, Kṛṣṇa discusses His own supreme transcendental nature (12-20). He enumerates some of His manifestations in the material world by which He maintains everything and all living beings. He is the source of the sun, moon and fire; He is the power of the planets to float in orbit; He is the digestive force in every body; He is the Supersoul in the hearts of all living beings; and He is the source and ultimate object of the *Vedas* (12-15). Kṛṣṇa explains that there are two classes of beings: the "fallible" (the conditioned souls in the material world) and the "infallible" (the liberated souls in the spiritual world). Beyond them is He Himself, who maintains both the material and spiritual worlds (16-17). Thus He is "celebrated both in the world and in the *Vedas* as that Supreme Person [Puruṣottama]." (18) Whoever knows Him as such is "the knower of everything," and thus he engages in undeviating devotional service to Him (19). Kṛṣṇa concludes by declaring that knowledge of His paramount stature and the rendering of service to Him is the essence of the Vedic scriptures. Such understanding leads to wisdom and perfection (20).



The Divine and Demoniatic Natures

TEXTS 1-3

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १ ॥

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ २ ॥

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।

भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: Fearlessness, purification of one's existence, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, charity, self-control, performance of sacrifice, study of the Vedas, austerity and simplicity; nonviolence, truthfulness, freedom from anger; renunciation, tranquility, aversion to fault-finding, compassion and freedom from covetousness; gentleness, modesty and steady determination; vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, freedom from envy and the passion for honor—these transcendental qualities, O son of Bharata, belong to godly men endowed with divine nature.

TEXT 4

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ संपदमासुरीम् ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arrogance, pride, anger, conceit, harshness and ignorance—these qualities belong to those of demonic nature, O son of Pṛthā.

TEXT 5

दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।
मा शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

The transcendental qualities are conducive to liberation, whereas the demonic qualities make for bondage. Do not worry, O son of Pāṇḍu, for you are born with the divine qualities.

TEXT 6

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽसिन्दैव आसुर एव च ।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Pṛthā, in this world there are two kinds of created beings. One is called the divine and the other demonic. I have already explained to you at length the divine qualities. Now hear from Me of the demoniac.

TEXT 7

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are demoniac do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done. Neither cleanliness nor proper behavior nor truth is found in them.

TEXT 8

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

They say that this world is unreal, that there is no foundation and that there is no God in control. It is produced of sex desire, and has no cause other than lust.

TEXT 9

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

Following such conclusions, the demoniac, who are lost to themselves and who have no intelligence, engage in unbeneficial, horrible works meant to destroy the world.

TEXT 10

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्ब्रह्मान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचित्रताः ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

The demoniac, taking shelter of insatiable lust, pride and false prestige, and being thus illusioned, are always sworn to unclean work, attracted by the impermanent.

TEXTS 11-12

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।
 कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥११॥
 आशापाशशतैर्वद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।
 ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसंचयान् ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

They believe that to gratify the senses unto the end of life is the prime necessity of human civilization. Thus there is no end to their anxiety. Being bound by hundreds and thousands of desires, by lust and anger, they secure money by illegal means for sense gratification.

TEXTS 13-15

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् ।
 इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥१३॥
 असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।
 ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी ॥१४॥
 आढ्योऽभिजनवानसि कोऽन्योस्ति सदृशो मया ।
 यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

The demoniac person thinks: "So much wealth do I have today, and I will gain more according to my schemes. So much is mine now, and it will increase in the future, more and more. He is my enemy, and I have killed him; and my other enemy will also be killed. I am the lord of everything, I

am the enjoyer, I am perfect, powerful and happy. I am the richest man, surrounded by aristocratic relatives. There is none so powerful and happy as I am. I shall perform sacrifices, I shall give some charity, and thus I shall rejoice." In this way, such persons are deluded by ignorance.

TEXT 16

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

Thus perplexed by various anxieties and bound by a network of illusions, one becomes too strongly attached to sense enjoyment and falls down into hell.

TEXT 17

आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।
यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १७

TRANSLATION

Self-complacent and always impudent, deluded by wealth and false prestige, they sometimes perform sacrifices in name only without following any rules or regulations.

TEXT 18

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

Bewildered by false ego, strength, pride, lust and anger, the demon becomes envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is situated in his own body and in the bodies of others, and blasphemes against the real religion.

TEXT 19

तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।
क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are envious and mischievous, who are the lowest among men, are cast by Me into the ocean of material existence, into various demoniac species of life.

TEXT 20

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनिजन्मनि ।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

Attaining repeated birth amongst the species of demoniac life, such persons can never approach Me. Gradually they sink down to the most abominable type of existence.

TEXT 21

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तप्सादेतत्रयं त्यजेत् ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

There are three gates leading to this hell—lust, anger, and greed. Every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul.

TEXT 22

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।
आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

The man who has escaped these three gates of hell, O son of Kuntī, performs acts conducive to self-realization and thus gradually attains the supreme destination.

TEXT 23

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

But he who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his own whims attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.

TEXT 24

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

One should understand what is duty and what is not duty by the regulations of the scriptures. Knowing such rules and regulations, one should act so that he may gradually be elevated.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa describes and compares two kinds of qualities and those who possess them. The divine or transcendental (daivī) qualities, in the mode of goodness, are conducive to spiritual progress; the demoniac (asurī) qualities, in the modes of passion and ignorance, conversely, are detrimental to spiritual progress, and they lead to lower

birth and further material bondage. Those who possess divine qualities live regulated lives, abiding by the authority of scripture, and attain perfection; those possessing demoniac qualities act whimsically (without reference to scripture) and are bound by material nature.

First, Kṛṣṇa lists twenty-three transcendental qualities "born of the godly atmosphere" (1-3). These qualities, as previously mentioned, are auspicious for progress on the path of liberation from the material world. Kṛṣṇa then gives Arjuna a synopsis of the qualities of the demoniac (viz., arrogance, pride, anger, conceit, harshness and ignorance). Kṛṣṇa states that the transcendental qualities lead to liberation whereas the demoniac qualities lead to bondage. He assures Arjuna that he need not worry, for he has been "born with transcendental qualities." Kṛṣṇa thus encourages Arjuna by indicating that Arjuna's involvement in the battle is not demoniac, for he is not acting under the influence of anger, false prestige or harshness. According to the scriptural injunctions governing his social order, fighting in a religious war is godly activity whereas refraining from such duty would be demoniac, or irreligious (4-5).

Kṛṣṇa then gives a graphic description of the demoniac. Essentially, the demoniac are atheists and materialists who violate the scriptural injunctions guiding human behavior, both socially and spiritually. Such persons conceive the world to have no foundation or purpose, and thus they tend toward whimsical and destructive activities. For them, the ultimate goal of life is gratification of the senses. They are attracted by impermanent, material things. Bound by multitudinous material desires, they obtain money by any means. They are conceited, lusty, complacent and impudent, and there is no end to their anxiety (6-18). Such demoniac persons take birth in various lower species of life and "sink down to the most abominable position of existence," wherein they can never approach Kṛṣṇa (19-20). Every sane man, Kṛṣṇa cautions, should give up lust, anger and greed, the "three gates leading down to hell." By escaping these, one can elevate oneself to self-realization and "the supreme destination" (21-22).

Kṛṣṇa concludes by saying that one who lives whimsically, without following the regulations of scripture (meant to elevate a person to spiritual realization), attains neither perfection nor happiness, whereas one who understands Vedic scriptural regulations and guides his life accordingly is gradually elevated (to spiritual perfection) (23-24).



The Divisions of Faith

TEXT 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।
ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said, O Kṛṣṇa, what is the situation of one who does not follow the principles of scripture but worships according to his own imagination? Is he in goodness, in passion or in ignorance?

TEXT 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said, according to the modes of nature acquired by the embodied soul, one's faith can be of three kinds—goodness, passion or ignorance. Now hear about these.

TEXT 3

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

According to one's existence under the various modes of nature, one evolves a particular kind of faith. The living being is said to be of a particular faith according to the modes he has acquired.

TEXT 4

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

Men in the mode of goodness worship the demigods; those in the mode of passion worship the demons; and those in the mode of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits.

TEXTS 5-6

अशास्त्रविहितं धोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।
दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः कामरागवृत्तान्विताः ॥ ५ ॥
कर्षयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।
मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान् ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

Those who undergo severe austerities and penances not recommended in the scriptures, performing them out of pride, egotism, lust and attachment, who are impelled by passion and who torture their bodily organs as well as the Supersoul dwelling within are to be known as demons.

TEXT 7

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

Even food of which all partake is of three kinds, according to the three modes of material nature. The same is true of sacrifices, austerities and charity. Listen, and I shall tell you of the distinctions of these.

TEXTS 8-10

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।
रस्याःस्निग्धाःस्थिरा हृद्या आहाराःसात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ ८ ॥
कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ ९ ॥
यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

Foods in the mode of goodness increase the duration of life, purify one's existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Such nourishing foods are sweet, juicy, fattening and palatable. Foods that are too bitter, too sour, salty, pungent, dry and hot, are liked by people in the modes of passion. Such foods cause pain, distress, and disease. Food cooked more than three hours before being eaten, which is tasteless, stale, putrid, decomposed and unclean, is food liked by people in the mode of ignorance.

TEXT 11

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥११॥

TRANSLATION

Of sacrifices, that sacrifice performed according to duty and to scriptural rules, and with no expectation of reward, is of the nature of goodness.

TEXT 12

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

But that sacrifice performed for some material end or benefit or performed ostentatiously, out of pride, is of the nature of passion, O chief of the Bhāratas.

TEXT 13

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥१३॥

TRANSLATION

And that sacrifice performed in defiance of scriptural injunctions, in which no spiritual food is distributed, no hymns are chanted and no remunerations are made to the priests, and which is faithless—that sacrifice is of the nature of ignorance.

TEXT 14

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शरीरं तप उच्यते ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

The austerity of the body consists in this: worship of the Supreme Lord, the brāhmanas, the spiritual master, and superiors like the father and mother. Cleanliness, simplicity, celibacy and nonviolence are also austerities of the body.

TEXT 15

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Austerity of speech consists in speaking truthfully and beneficially and in avoiding speech that offends. One should also recite the Vedas regularly.

TEXT 16

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

And serenity, simplicity, gravity, self-control and purity of thought are the austerities of the mind.

TEXT 17

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तन्निविधं नरैः ।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

This threefold austerity, practiced by men whose aim is not to benefit themselves materially but to please the Supreme, is of the nature of goodness.

TEXT 18

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

Those ostentatious penances and austerities which are performed in order to gain respect, honor and reverence are said to be in the mode of passion. They are neither stable nor permanent.

TEXT 19

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

And those penances and austerities which are performed foolishly by means of obstinate self-torture, or to destroy or injure others, are said to be in the mode of ignorance.

TEXT 20

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

That gift which is given out of duty, at the proper time and place, to a worthy person, and without expectation of return, is considered to be charity in the mode of goodness.

TEXT 21

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।
दीयते च परिक्रिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

But charity performed with the expectation of some return, or with a desire for fruitive results, or in a grudging mood, is said to be charity in the mode of passion.

TEXT 22

अदेशकाले यदानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।
असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

And charity performed at an improper place and time and given to unworthy persons without respect and with contempt is charity in the mode of ignorance.

TEXT 23

ओंतत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।
ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

From the beginning of creation, the three syllables—om tat sat—have been used to indicate the Supreme Absolute Truth [Brahman]. They were uttered by brāhmaṇas while chanting Vedic hymns and during sacrifices, for the satisfaction of the Supreme.

TEXT 24

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

Thus the transcendentalists undertake sacrifices, charities, and penances, beginning always with om, to attain the Supreme.

TEXT 25

तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

One should perform sacrifice, penance and charity with the word tat. The purpose of such transcendental activities is to get free from the material entanglement.

TEXTS 26-27

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥२६॥
यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

The Absolute Truth is the objective of devotional sacrifice, and it is indicated by the word sat. These works of sacrifice, of penance and of charity, true to the absolute nature, are performed to please the Supreme Person, O son of Prthā.

TEXT 28

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

But sacrifices, austerities and charities performed without faith in the Supreme are nonpermanent, O son of Prthā, regardless of whatever rites are performed. They are called asat and are useless both in this life and the next.

SUMMARY

In the Fourteenth Chapter Kṛṣṇa explained to Arjuna that the way to transcend the three modes of material nature is to perform devotional service (*bhakti-yoga*) to Him. Kṛṣṇa concludes Chapter Fifteen by declaring that His supreme divinity and worship of Him are the confidential essence of Vedic knowledge. Then, in the Sixteenth Chapter, He stresses that in order to be elevated spiritually, one should act according to the regulations of Vedic scripture.

Now, at the opening of this chapter, Arjuna inquires about the position of one who concocts some method of worship according to his own imagination, ignoring scriptural regulations. Is that kind of faith in goodness, passion or ignorance? (1) In response, Kṛṣṇa explains that there are three types of faith, corresponding to and evolving from the three modes of nature (2-6). He then describes the characteristics of four items—food, sacrifice (*yajña*), austerity (*tapasya*) and charity (*dāna*)—according to each of the three modes. Sacrifice, penance and austerity in the lower modes (ignorance and passion) are performed for selfish, temporary, material benefits, such as the attainment of wealth, honor and power. The same acts performed in goodness, however, are executed according to duty and scriptural regulations, without fruitive intentions and for the purpose of purification and elevation (7-22). In the final verses, Kṛṣṇa explains, in essence, that acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity should be performed for His satisfaction only. Referring to the traditional Vedic system of sacrifice, wherein the words *Oṃ tat sat* (indicating the Supreme Absolute Truth) are uttered by *brāhmaṇas* to please the Supreme, Kṛṣṇa explains that sacrifice, penance and charity, when performed for His satisfaction, become a means for spiritual advancement. Acts of faith performed without faith in the Supreme and in violation of the scriptures (i.e. in passion and ignorance) yield only impermanent, material results and are therefore useless. Worship or faith in the mode of goodness, however, based on scriptural regulation and performed out of duty, purifies the heart of the performer and leads to pure faith and devotion for Kṛṣṇa. That faith (i.e. devotion for Kṛṣṇa) is *nirguṇa*, or transcendental to the modes of nature (23-28).

SUMMARY

In the Fourteenth Chapter a note explains to Arjuna that the way to transcend the physical modes of material nature is to perform devotional service (bhakti-yoga) to Him. Kṛṣṇa concludes Chapter Fifteen by declaring that His superior dignity and work is of Him and the confidential associates of Vedic knowledge. Then in the Sixteenth Chapter, He stresses that in order to be elevated spiritually, one should act according to the regulations of Vedic scripture.

Now, at the opening of this chapter, Arjuna inquires about the position of one who conceals some method of worship according to his own imagination, ignoring scriptural regulations. In the first kind of faith in goodness, passion or ignorance? (1) In response, Kṛṣṇa explains that there are three types of faith corresponding to the three modes of nature (2-6). The first is faith in the characteristics of four elements—food, water, fire, and air—and the second is faith in the qualities of the earth, the water, the fire, and the air. The third is faith in the qualities of the earth, the water, the fire, and the air. The first mode is faith in the qualities of the earth, the water, the fire, and the air. The second mode is faith in the qualities of the earth, the water, the fire, and the air. The third mode is faith in the qualities of the earth, the water, the fire, and the air.

The same acts performed in goodness, however, are considered as leading to duty and spiritual advancement, without fruitive reactions and in the purpose of purification and elevation (17-22). In the third chapter, Kṛṣṇa explains in essence that acts of sacrifice, in fact, are the means should be performed for the attainment of the spiritual goal. The spiritual path (system of activities) within the words of the Vedas is the path to the Supreme Absolute Truth and greatest advancement in pleasure and power. Kṛṣṇa explains that sacrifice, in essence, is duty, when performed for His satisfaction, becomes a means for spiritual advancement. Acts of faith performed without faith in the spiritual and in violation of the scriptures are in passion and ignorance, and only impure material results and no spiritual benefit. The results of duty performed out of goodness, however, lead to the spiritual goal, and the results of duty performed out of passion and ignorance lead to pure duty and no spiritual benefit. The path of duty (Kṛpā) is the path to the Supreme Absolute Truth (Kṛpā) is the path to the Supreme Absolute Truth.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN



Conclusion— The Perfection of Renunciation

TEXT 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।
संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथकेशिनिषूदन ॥ १ ॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said, O mighty-armed one, I wish to understand the purpose of renunciation [tyāga] and of the renounced order of life [sannyāsa], O killer of the Keśi demon, Hṛṣīkeśa.

TEXT 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ २ ॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord said, To give up the results of all activities is called renunciation [tyāga] by the wise. And that state is called the renounced order of life [sannyāsa] by great learned men.

TEXT 3

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म ग्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।
यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥ ३ ॥

TRANSLATION

Some learned men declare that all kinds of fruitive activities should be given up, but there are yet other sages who maintain that acts of sacrifice, charity and penance should never be abandoned.

TEXT 4

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः ॥ ४ ॥

TRANSLATION

O best of the Bhāratas, hear from Me now about renunciation. O tiger among men, there are three kinds of renunciation declared in the scriptures.

TEXT 5

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥ ५ ॥

TRANSLATION

Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not to be given up but should be performed. Indeed, sacrifice, charity and penance purify even the great souls.

TEXT 6

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥ ६ ॥

TRANSLATION

All these activities should be performed without any expectation of result. They should be performed as a matter of duty, O son of Prthā. That is My final opinion.

TEXT 7

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।
मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ ७ ॥

TRANSLATION

Prescribed duties should never be renounced. If, by illusion, one gives up his prescribed duties, such renunciation is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

TEXT 8

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्प्यजेत् ।
स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥ ८ ॥

TRANSLATION

Anyone who gives up prescribed duties as troublesome, or out of fear, is said to be in the mode of passion. Such action never leads to the elevation of renunciation.

TEXT 9

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।
सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ ९ ॥

TRANSLATION

But he who performs his prescribed duty only because it ought to be done, and renounces all attachment to the fruit—his renunciation is of the nature of goodness, O Arjuna.

TEXT 10

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ १० ॥

TRANSLATION

Those who are situated in the mode of goodness, who neither hate inauspicious work nor are attached to auspicious work, have no doubts about work.

TEXT 11

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ ११ ॥

TRANSLATION

It is indeed impossible for an embodied being to give up all activities. Therefore it is said that he who renounces the fruits of action is one who has truly renounced.

TEXT 12

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥१२॥

TRANSLATION

For one who is not renounced, the threefold fruits of action—desirable, undesirable and mixed—accrue after death. But those who are in the renounced order of life have no such results to suffer or enjoy.

TEXTS 13-14

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।
साङ्ख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणां ॥१३॥
अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक्केष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥१४॥

TRANSLATION

O mighty-armed Arjuna, learn from Me of the five factors which bring about the accomplishment of all action. These are declared in sãkhya philosophy to be the place of action, the performer, the senses, the endeavor, and ultimately the Supersoul.

TEXT 15

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।
न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥१५॥

TRANSLATION

Whatever right or wrong action a man performs by body, mind or speech is caused by these five factors.

TEXT 16

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धितान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥१६॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore one who thinks himself the only doer, not considering the five factors, is certainly not very intelligent and cannot see things as they are.

TEXT 17

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।
हत्वाऽपि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥१७॥

TRANSLATION

One who is not motivated by false ego, whose intelligence is not entangled, though he kills men in this world, is not the slayer. Nor is he bound by his actions.

TEXT 18

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥१८॥

TRANSLATION

Knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower are the three factors which motivate action; the senses, the work and the doer comprise the threefold basis of action.

TEXT 19

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।
प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥१९॥

TRANSLATION

In accordance with the three modes of material nature, there are three kinds of knowledge, action, and performers of action. Listen as I describe them.

TEXT 20

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥२०॥

TRANSLATION

That knowledge by which one undivided spiritual nature is seen in all existences, undivided in the divided, is knowledge in the mode of goodness.

TEXT 21

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान् ।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥२१॥

TRANSLATION

That knowledge by which a different type of living entity is seen to be dwelling in different bodies is knowledge in the mode of passion.

TEXT 22

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥२२॥

TRANSLATION

And that knowledge by which one is attached to one kind of work as the all in all, without knowledge of the truth, and which is very meager, is said to be in the mode of darkness.

TEXT 23

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।
अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥२३॥

TRANSLATION

As for actions, that action in accordance with duty, which is performed without attachment, without love or hate, by one who has renounced fruitive results, is called action in the mode of goodness.

TEXT 24

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहङ्गारेण वा पुनः ।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥२४॥

TRANSLATION

But action performed with great effort by one seeking to gratify his desires, and which is enacted from a sense of false ego, is called action in the mode of passion.

TEXT 25

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनपेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥२५॥

TRANSLATION

And that action performed in ignorance and delusion without consideration of future bondage or consequences, which inflicts injury and is impractical, is said to be action in the mode of ignorance.

TEXT 26

शुक्तसङ्गो न हंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥२६॥

TRANSLATION

The worker who is free from all material attachments and false ego, who is enthusiastic and resolute and who is indifferent to success or failure, is a worker in the mode of goodness.

TEXT 27

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥२७॥

TRANSLATION

But that worker who is attached to the fruits of his labor and who passionately wants to enjoy them, who is greedy, envious and impure and moved by happiness and distress, is a worker in the mode of passion.

TEXT 28

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥२८॥

TRANSLATION

And that worker who is always engaged in work against the injunction of the scripture, who is materialistic, obstinate, cheating and expert in insulting others, who is lazy, always morose and procrastinating, is a worker in the mode of ignorance.

TEXT 29

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनंजय ॥२९॥

TRANSLATION

Now, O winner of wealth, please listen as I tell you in detail of the three kinds of understanding and determination according to the three modes of nature.

TEXT 30

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥३०॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Pṛthā, that understanding by which one knows what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, what is binding and what is liberating, that understanding is established in the mode of goodness.

TEXT 31

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।
अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३१ ॥

TRANSLATION

And that understanding which cannot distinguish between the religious way of life and the irreligious, between action that should be done and action that should not be done, that imperfect understanding, O son of Pṛthā, is in the mode of passion.

TEXT 32

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।
सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ ३२ ॥

TRANSLATION

That understanding which considers irreligion to be religion and religion to be irreligion, under the spell of illusion and darkness, and strives always in the wrong direction, O Pārtha, is in the mode of ignorance.

TEXT 33

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥३३॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Prthā, that determination which is unbreakable, which is sustained with steadfastness by yoga practice, and thus controls the mind, life, and the acts of the senses, is in the mode of goodness.

TEXT 34

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥३४॥

TRANSLATION

And that determination by which one holds fast to fruitive result in religion, economic development and sense gratification is of the nature of passion, O Arjuna.

TEXT 35

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।
न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥३५॥

TRANSLATION

And that determination which cannot go beyond dreaming, fearfulness, lamentation, moroseness, and illusion—such unintelligent determination is in the mode of darkness.

TEXTS 36-37

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥३६॥
यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥३७॥

TRANSLATION

O best of the Bhāratas, now please hear from Me about the three kinds of happiness which the conditioned soul enjoys, and by which he sometimes comes to the end of all distress. That which in the beginning may be just like poison but at the end is just like nectar and which awakens one to self-realization is said to be happiness in the mode of goodness.

TEXT 38

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥३८॥

TRANSLATION

That happiness which is derived from contact of the senses with their objects and which appears like nectar at first but poison at the end is said to be of the nature of passion.

TEXT 39

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।
निद्रालसप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥३९॥

TRANSLATION

And that happiness which is blind to self-realization, which is delusion from beginning to end and which arises from sleep, laziness and illusion is said to be of the nature of ignorance.

TEXT 40

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यान्निभिर्गुणैः ॥४०॥

TRANSLATION

There is no being existing, either here or among the demigods in the higher planetary systems, which is freed from the three modes of material nature.

TEXT 41

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥४१॥

TRANSLATION

Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras are distinguished by their qualities of work, O chastiser of the enemy, in accordance with the modes of nature.

TEXT 42

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४२॥

TRANSLATION

Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge, and religiousness—these are the qualities by which the brāhmaṇas work.

TEXT 43

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४३॥

TRANSLATION

Heroism, power, determination, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity, and leadership are the qualities of work for the kṣatriyas.

TEXT 44

कृषिगोरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥४४॥

TRANSLATION

Farming, cattle raising and business are the qualities of work for the vaiśyas, and for the śūdras there is labor and service to others.

TEXT 45

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥४५॥

TRANSLATION

By following his qualities of work, every man can become perfect. Now please hear from Me how this can be done.

TEXT 46

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥४६॥

TRANSLATION

By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, man can, in the performance of his own duty, attain perfection.

TEXT 47

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥४७॥

TRANSLATION

It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform

it perfectly. Prescribed duties, according to one's nature, are never affected by sinful reactions.

TEXT 48

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोपमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥४८॥

TRANSLATION

Every endeavor is covered by some sort of fault, just as fire is covered by smoke. Therefore one should not give up the work which is born of his nature, O son of Kuntī, even if such work is full of fault.

TEXT 49

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥४९॥

TRANSLATION

One can obtain the results of renunciation simply by self-control and by becoming unattached to material things and disregarding material enjoyments. That is the highest perfectional stage of renunciation.

TEXT 50

सिद्धिं प्राप्नो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥५०॥

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuntī, learn from Me in brief how one can attain to the supreme perfectional stage, Brahman, by acting in the way which I shall now summarize.

TEXTS 51-53

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च।
 शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥५१॥
 विविक्तसेवी लब्धाशी यत्तवाक्कायमानसः।
 ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥५२॥
 अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम्।
 विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥५३॥

TRANSLATION

Being purified by his intelligence and controlling the mind with determination, giving up the objects of sense gratification, being freed from attachment and hatred, one who lives in a secluded place, who eats little and who controls the body and the tongue, and is always in trance and is detached, who is without false ego, false strength, false pride, lust, anger, and who does not accept material things, such a person is certainly elevated to the position of self-realization.

TEXT 54

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति।
 समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥५४॥

TRANSLATION

One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.

TEXT 55

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः।
 ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥५५॥

TRANSLATION

One can understand the Supreme Personality as He is only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of the Supreme Lord by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God.

TEXT 56

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्भयाश्रयः ।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं वदमव्ययम् ॥५६॥

TRANSLATION

Though engaged in all kinds of activities, My devotee, under My protection, reaches the eternal and imperishable abode by My grace.

TEXT 57

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥५७॥

TRANSLATION

In all activities just depend upon Me and work always under My protection. In such devotional service, be fully conscious of Me.

TEXT 58

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।
अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्कारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥५८॥

TRANSLATION

If you become conscious of Me, you will pass over all the obstacles of conditional life by My grace. If, however, you do not work in such consciousness but act through false ego, not hearing Me, you will be lost.

TEXT 59

यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वांनियोक्ष्यति ॥५९॥

TRANSLATION

If you do not act according to My direction and do not fight, then you will be falsely directed. By your nature, you will have to be engaged in warfare.

TEXT 60

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोपि तत् ॥६०॥

TRANSLATION

Under illusion you are now declining to act according to My direction. But, compelled by your own nature, you will act all the same, O son of Kuntī.

TEXT 61

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥६१॥

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.

TEXT 62

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥६२॥

TRANSLATION

O scion of Bharata, surrender unto Him utterly. By His grace you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme and eternal abode.

TEXT 63

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥६३॥

TRANSLATION

Thus I have explained to you the most confidential of all knowledge. Deliberate on this fully, and then do what you wish to do.

TEXT 64

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥६४॥

TRANSLATION

Because you are My very dear friend, I am speaking to you the most confidential part of knowledge. Hear this from Me, for it is for your benefit.

TEXT 65

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥६५॥

TRANSLATION

Always think of Me and become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend.

TEXT 66

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥६६॥

TRANSLATION

Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear.

TEXT 67

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥६७॥

TRANSLATION

This confidential knowledge may not be explained to those who are not austere, or devoted, or engaged in devotional service, nor to one who is envious of Me.

TEXT 68

य इदं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥६८॥

TRANSLATION

For one who explains the supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me.

TEXT 69

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥६९॥

TRANSLATION

There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.

TEXT 70

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥७०॥

TRANSLATION

And I declare that he who studies this sacred conversation worships Me by his intelligence.

TEXT 71

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥७१॥

TRANSLATION

And one who listens with faith and without envy becomes free from sinful reaction and attains to the planets where the pious dwell.

TEXT 72

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनंजय ॥७२॥

TRANSLATION

O conqueror of wealth, Arjuna, have you heard this attentively with your mind? And are your illusions and ignorance now dispelled?

TEXT 73

अर्जुन उवाच ।
 नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाऽच्युत ।
 स्थितोऽसि गतसंदेहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥७६॥

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said, My dear Kṛṣṇa, O infallible one, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy, and I am now firm and free from doubt and am prepared to act according to Your instructions.

TEXT 74

सञ्जय उवाच ।
 इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।
 संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥७४॥

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: Thus have I heard the conversation of two great souls, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. And so wonderful is that message that my hair is standing on end.

TEXT 75

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्ब्रह्महं परम् ।
 योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥७५॥

TRANSLATION

By the mercy of Vyāsa, I have heard these most confidential talks directly from the master of all mysticism, Kṛṣṇa, who was speaking personally to Arjuna.

TEXT 76

राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।
 केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥७६॥

TRANSLATION

O King, as I repeatedly recall this wondrous and holy dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, I take pleasure, being thrilled at every moment.

TEXT 77

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।
 विस्रयो मे महान्राजन्हृष्यामि च पुनःपुनः ॥७७॥

TRANSLATION

O King, when I remember the wonderful form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, I am struck with even greater wonder, and I rejoice again and again.

TEXT 78

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
 तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥७८॥

TRANSLATION

Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion.

SUMMARY

The Eighteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* is both a synopsis and the conclusion of all the *Gītā*'s teachings. Since the *Gītā* stresses renunciation of material activities (and engagement in spiritual elevation), Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa to explain definitively the purpose of renunciation (*tyāga*) and of the renounced order of life (*sannyāsa*) (1). In reply, Kṛṣṇa reiterates that renunciation does not mean giving up all actions, since this is impossible for the embodied soul. It means, rather, giving up fruitive ac-

tions and instead performing prescribed duties without attachment to their results. For those who are not renounced, the fruits of action (desirable, undesirable and mixed) accrue after death, whereas for the renounced there are no such results to suffer or enjoy. Thus a wise renouncer is liberated from the bondage of *karma* (2-12).

Kṛṣṇa then explains how one can act without material reactions. He cites Sāṅkhya philosophy, which delineates five factors that contribute to the accomplishment of all actions, viz. the place of action, the performer, the senses, the endeavor and the Supersoul. One who thinks himself the exclusive factor in actions (not considering the other factors, especially the Supersoul, the *final cause*) is in ignorance (and becomes entangled by the fruits of his work). But when one acts, according to the direction of the Supersoul, without personally motivated desires, his actions do not entail material reactions. Kṛṣṇa thus indicates to Arjuna that if Arjuna acts according to His directions, Arjuna will not be the actual slayer, nor will he suffer the consequences of killing in the battlefield (13-18).

The three modes of nature predominate in different aspects of human psychology and endeavor. Knowledge, action, workers, intelligence, determination and happiness each have three types, as regulated by the three modes. Kṛṣṇa systematically analyzes these (19-40).

According to the material modes one has assumed, one conforms to one of the four occupational divisions of human society: *brāhmaṇas* (teachers and priests), *kṣatriyas* (rulers and warriors), *vaiśyas* (farmers, traders, etc.) and *śūdras* (laborers). Kṛṣṇa enumerates the respective qualities and duties of each of the four social divisions (*varṇas*) and explains that by adhering to the duties prescribed by one's own occupational division, and by offering the results of one's work to the Lord, one can attain perfection. By working in accordance with his social duty (which is determined by the modes of nature), the conditioned soul can ultimately transcend the modes. Therefore, it is in Arjuna's best interest to act according to *kṣatriya* principles and fight in the battle, for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction (41-48).

Kṛṣṇa concludes that one can attain the highest perfection of renunciation by control of the mind and by complete detachment from material things and material enjoyments (49).

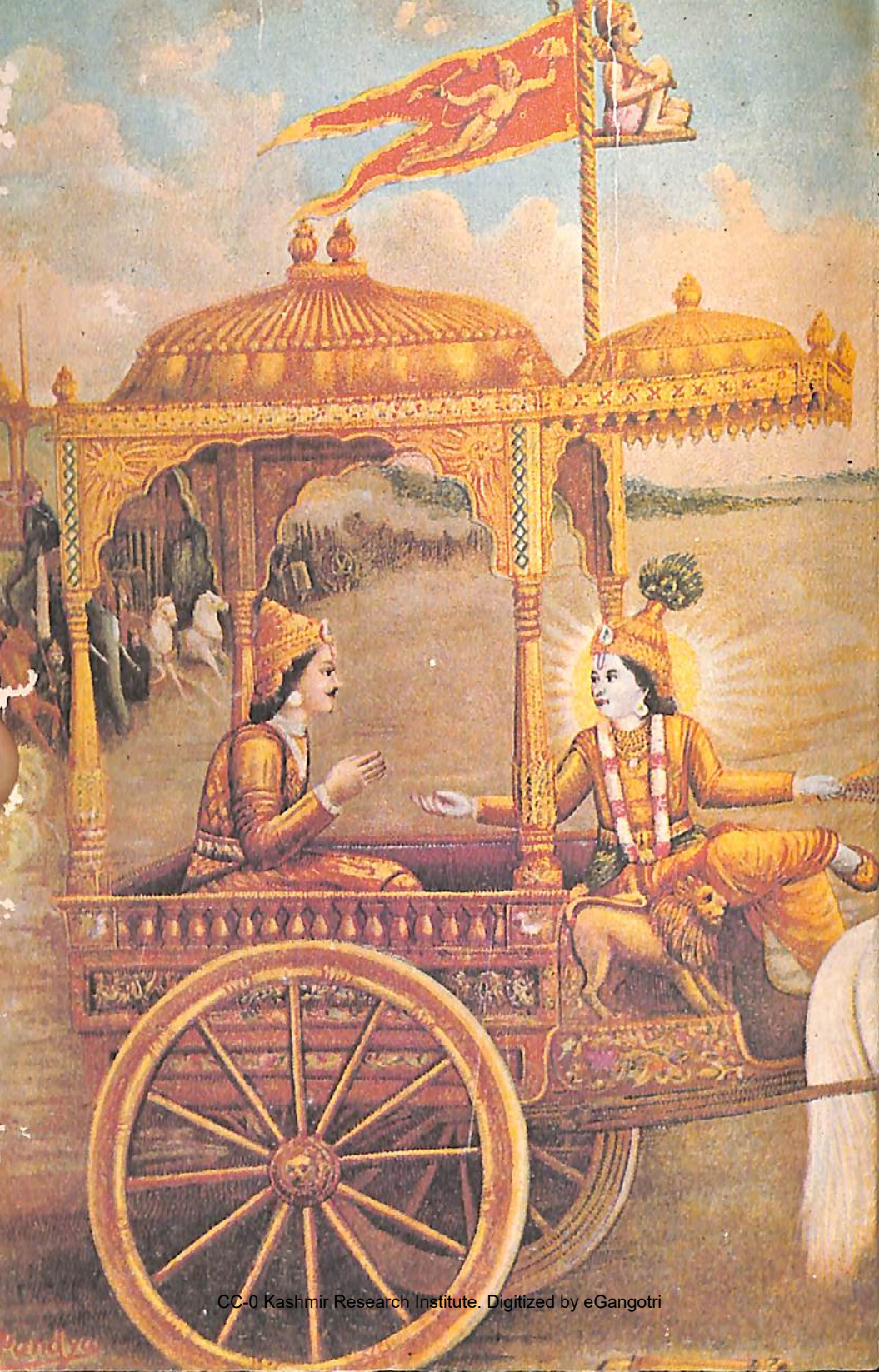
Kṛṣṇa next explains the stage following renunciation: attainment of Brahman, the preliminary stage of transcendence. This state, based upon spiritual knowledge, is characterized by joyfulness resulting from freedom from material desire and duality. "In that state," Kṛṣṇa says, "one achieves pure devotional service unto Me." (50-54)

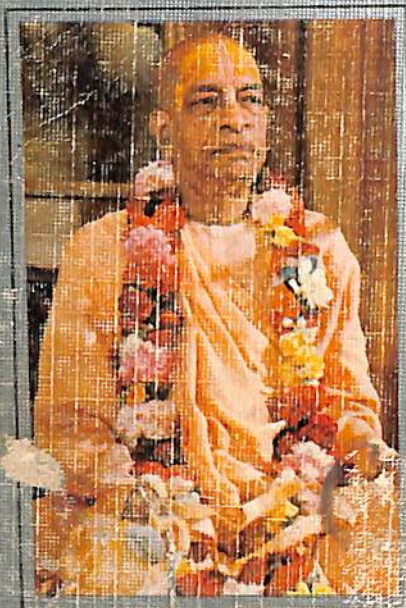
Supreme Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead—be understood. By understanding Kṛṣṇa, one can enter into the kingdom of God (55). Acting always under His supreme protection, always conscious of Him, His devotee transcends all obstacles of conditional life and reaches the spiritual kingdom by His grace (56–58). Kṛṣṇa warns Arjuna that even if he neglects His divine instructions and, under the influence of illusion, avoids his duty, he will still be compelled to fight by his conditioning as a *kṣatriya* (59–60). Realizing Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul in the heart, the supreme controller and director of the wanderings of all living entities, Arjuna should fully surrender unto Him and thus have transcendental peace and attain the eternal abode (61–62). After instructing Arjuna to deliberate on this very confidential knowledge (i.e. surrender to Kṛṣṇa's form as Supersoul) (63), Kṛṣṇa imparts "the most confidential part of knowledge," the supreme instruction, the essence and conclusion of the *Gītā*: one must relinquish all religious processes and duties (viz. *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *dhyāna-yoga*, the socio-religious duties of the social orders, attainment of Brahman and Paramātmā, etc.) and simply surrender unto Kṛṣṇa as His pure devotee in eternal, transcendental loving service—the eternal and supreme *dharma*. "Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend. Give up all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall protect you from all sinful reactions. Therefore you have nothing to fear." (65–66)

In the next verse, Kṛṣṇa states the qualifications for understanding the *Gītā*: the hearer must be austere, devoted, non-envious and engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service (67). One who imparts Kṛṣṇa's teachings is Kṛṣṇa's most dear servant and attains pure devotion to Him (68–69). One who studies the *Gītā* "worships Me by his intelligence," and one who hears its teachings with faith is freed from all sins (70–71).

In the final climax to the narrative of Arjuna's dilemma, Kṛṣṇa inquires, "Have you heard this with your mind at perfect attention? And are your ignorance and illusion now dispelled?" Arjuna confidently answers, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, O infallible one, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy, and now I am steady and free from doubt and am prepared to act according to Your instructions." (72–73)

In a brief epilogue, Sañjaya, who has been narrating the entire conversation to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, rejoices in ecstasy at having heard the sacred dialogue. His hairs standing on end in joy, he concludes, "Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion." (74-78)





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School of Oriental and African Studies
London University

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Mahatma Gandhi